

DOCUMENTS ON PALESTINE

Volume VIII (2005-2007):

15. Disengagement from Gaza – Annapolis Conference
(2005-2007)

Edited by Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi



PASSIA
Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs

PASSIA, the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, is an independent Palestinian non-profit institution, not affiliated with any government, political party or organization. PASSIA seeks to present the Question of Palestine in its national, regional and international contexts through academic research, dialogue and publication.

PASSIA endeavors that research undertaken under its auspices be specialized and scientific and that its symposia and workshops, whether international or intra-Palestinian, be open, self-critical and conducted in a spirit of cooperation.

The publication of this book was kindly supported by the **Finnish Representative Office** in Ramallah (<http://www.finrep.org/>) and by the **Palestine Investment Fund (PIF)**, Ramallah (<http://www.pif.ps>), which is an independent Palestinian company with all its assets and capital belonging to the Palestinian people, aiming to develop a sustainable, strong Palestinian national economy through various strategic investments in association with the private sector.



REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE
OF FINLAND, RAMALLAH



صندوق الاستثمار الفلسطيني
PALESTINE INVESTMENT FUND

Volumes of this series:

Volume I: Until 1947
Volume II: 1948-1973
Volume III: 1974-1987
Volume IV: 1987-1994
Volume V: 1995-1999
Volume VI: 1999-2002
Volume VII: 2002-2005
Volume VIII: 2005-2007

ISBN 978-9950-305-31-1

Copyright © PASSIA

PASSIA Publication – December 2007

Tel: (02)626 4426 ▪ Fax: (02)628 2819

E-mail: passia@palnet.com ▪ Website: www.passia.org

PO Box 19545, Jerusalem

CONTENTS

◆◆◆◆ Volume VIII

Introduction	i
15. <u>Disengagement from Gaza - Annapolis Conference (2005-2007)</u>	1
Israeli Cabinet, Communiqué on the Disengagement from Three Settlements in Gaza and on the Shafa' Amr Attack, 7 August 2005	1
Israeli Cabinet, Communiqué on the Beginning of the Implementation of the Disengagement Plan, Jerusalem, 15 August 2005	2
Israeli Foreign Ministry, Statement on Israeli-Palestinian Coordination on Eve of Disengagement, 15 August 2005	4
European Union Presidency, Statement on Shootings in the West Bank and the European Commission's Delegation to Israel, 17 August 2005	5
Report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied by Israel since 1967 (UNGA A/60/271), 18 August 2005 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	5
President Mahmoud Abbas, Decree on the Legislative Elections, Gaza, 20 August 2005	17
UN Security Council President Kenzo Oshima, Statement on Israeli Disengagement, New York, 24 August 2005	18
Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, Statement on the Completion of Evacuation of Israeli Settlers from Gaza and Parts of the Northern West Bank, 24 August 2005	18
European Union Presidency, Statement on Behalf of the European Union on the Israeli Disengagement, Brussels, 25 August 2005	18
European Fact-Finding Delegation, Statement Following a Visit to Israel and Palestine, Jerusalem, 28 August 2005	19
Statement by the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, UN General Assembly, 30 August 2005	22
Gulf Cooperation Council, Communiqué of the 96 th Foreign Ministers Meeting, Jeddah, 6 September 2005 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	23
President Mahmoud Abbas, Address Marking Israel's Evacuation of the Gaza Strip, Gaza City, 13 September 2005	24
Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Address Before the UN General Assembly, 15 September 2005	27

Quartet Statement on Middle East Peace, United Nations, New York, 20 September 2005	30
European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Remarks to the Joint Meeting of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of the European Parliament and of National Parliaments, Brussels, 5 October 2005	31
US President George W. Bush, Remarks after Meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas, White House, Washington, DC, 20 October 2005	32
President Mahmoud Abbas, Remarks after Meeting with President George W. Bush, White House, Washington, DC, 20 October 2005	33
Quartet Statement on Middle East Peace, United Nations, New York, 28 October 2005	35
European Union, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2687 th External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 7 November 2005	36
EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Address to the Israeli Export and International Cooperation Institute and the Manufacturer's Association of Israel, 13 November 2005	37
Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on Movement and Access, 15 November 2005	40
Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, 15 November 2005	42
Tehran Declaration, 13 th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States, Tehran, 20-21 November 2005	43
Message from the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and Prime Minister of Malaysia, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, on the Occasion of the Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Putrajaya, 29 November 2005	44
Quartet Statement on Middle East Peace, United Nations, New York, 5 December 2005	46
Final Communiqué of the 3 rd Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, Mecca, 7-8 December 2005	47
Joint Israeli-Palestinian Private Sector Declaration, Conference on Promoting Economic Growth in West Bank and Gaza, London, 13 December 2005	50
United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Caracas, 13-14 December 2005	52
US House of Representatives, Resolution 575, Washington, DC, 16 December 2005	54
Statement by the Middle East Quartet on the Palestinian Legislative Council Elections, 28 December 2005	55
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks on Security and the Palestinian Elections, Washington, DC, 11 January 2006	56
Israeli Cabinet, Decision on the Palestinian Elections, Jerusalem, 15 January 2006 <i>[Excerpts]</i>	57

European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Remarks to the Press Prior to the Palestinian Legislative Council Elections, 17 January 2006	59
Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Statement Upon Assuming Office, Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 18 January 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	60
EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Speech on the Middle East Peace Process, European Parliament, Strasbourg, 19 January 2006	61
Acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Address to the 6 th Herzliya Conference, 24 January 2006	63
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech after the Announcement of the Results of the 2 nd Palestinian Legislative Council Elections, Ramallah, 26 January 2006	66
Israeli Prime Minister's Bureau, Statement on the Palestinian Legislative Council, Jerusalem, 26 January 2006	67
Statement by the Middle East Quartet on the Palestinian Legislative Council Elections, Washington, DC, 26 January 2006	68
European Union Presidency, Statement on the Palestinian Legislative Council Elections, Brussels, 26 January 2006	68
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks on the Palestinian Legislative Council Elections, World Economic Forum, Davos, 26 January 2006	68
Israeli Cabinet Communiqué, "Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is Still Key Element in PNA," Jerusalem, 29 January 2006	69
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, London, 30 January 2006	71
European Union, Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2706 th External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 30 January 2006	72
US House of Representatives, Limitation on Assistance to the Palestinian Authority Act of 2006, HR 4668 IH, 109 th Congress, 2 nd Session, Washington, DC, 31 January 2006	72
US Senate, Palestinian Compliance Act of 2006, 109 th Congress, 2 nd Session, S.2237, Washington, DC, 1 February 2006	74
European Parliament, Resolution on the Result of the Palestinian Elections and the Situation in East Jerusalem, 2 February 2006	75
UN Security Council, Presidential Statement Congratulating the Palestinian People on Free, Fair Electoral Process, 5365 th Meeting, New York, 3 February 2006	76
Acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Address to the 6 th Annual Israel-Europe Conference, 6 February 2006	77
US Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, House Resolution H.R.4681, 109 th Congress, 2 nd Session, 7 February 2006	80

World Council of Churches, General Secretary, Letter to Members of the Middle East Quartet, Geneva, 8 February 2006	85
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks Following a Meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas, Ramallah, 16 February 2006	87
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech at the Opening Session of the Second Palestinian Legislative Council, 18 February 2006	88
Marwan Barghouti, Message to the First Session of the 2 nd Palestinian Legislative Council, Hadarim Prison, Israel, 18 February 2006	95
Israeli Cabinet, Statement on Adopted Measures Vis-à-vis the Palestinian Authority, Jerusalem, 19 February 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	96
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2712 th General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 27 February 2006	98
Program of the Hamas Government, 11 March 2006	98
European Union Presidency, Statement on the Israeli Attack on Jericho Prison, Vienna, 15 March 2006	99
Joint Communiqué, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Executive Committee Ministerial Meeting, Jeddah, 16 March 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	100
Russian President Vladimir Putin, Message for the Participants in the Arab League Summit, Khartoum, 28 March 2006	101
Statement by Church Leaders on Israeli Elections, Jerusalem, 29 March 2006	102
Quartet Statement on Middle East Peace, United Nations, New York, 30 March 2006	103
Palestinian Minister for Foreign Affairs Mahmoud Zahhar, Letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Minister's Office, Gaza, 4 April 2006	104
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Speech on the Middle East Peace Process, European Parliament, Strasbourg, 5 April 2006	105
Istanbul Declaration, Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUOIC), 14 th Executive Committee, 8 th Council and 4 th Conference, Istanbul, 8-13 April 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	108
Resolutions Adopted by the 4 th Session of the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States, Istanbul, 8-13 April 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	109
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2723 rd General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Luxembourg, 10-11 April 2006	110
European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Remarks Regarding the Suspension of Aid to Palestinian, European Parliament Plenary, Brussels, 26 April 2006	111

President Mahmoud Abbas, Call for Convening an International Conference to Resolve the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, Nobel Institute, Oslo, 26 April 2006	112
Israeli Cabinet, Decision to Approve Changes in the Security Fence Route, Jerusalem, 30 April 2006 <i>[Excerpts]</i>	115
US Christian Leaders, Letter to US President Bush, Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli PM-Elect Olmert, Urging Immediate Action to Restore Hope for Peace, 2 May 2006	116
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Address to the Knesset, Jerusalem, 4 May 2006 <i>[Excerpts]</i>	118
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, New York, 9 May 2006	120
National Conciliation Document of the Palestinian Prisoners (Original Version), 11 May 2006	121
European Union Council, Conclusions on Middle East Peace Process, 2728 th External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 15 May 2006	125
Joint Communiqué of the Cooperation Council, 16 th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, Brussels, 15 May 2006 <i>[Excerpts]</i>	125
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech before the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 16 May 2006	126
World Council of Churches, Executive Committee, Statement on Israel/Palestine: 'The Time is Ripe to Do What is Right,' Geneva, 19 May 2006	128
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech before the World Economic Forum, Sharm El-Sheikh, 21 May 2006	131
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Address to a Joint Session of the US Congress, Washington, DC, 24 May 2006 <i>[Excerpts]</i>	134
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Letter to the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Regarding the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, 25 May 2006	136
Keynote Address by Chairman of the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Ministerial Meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau, Putrajaya, 29 May 2006 <i>[Excerpts]</i>	138
Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Speech on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict at the Opening of the NAM's Ministerial Meeting, Putrajaya, 29 May 2006 <i>[Excerpts]</i>	139
Closing Statement, Palestinian National Dialogue Conference, Ramallah and Gaza, 30 May 2006	139
European Parliament, Resolution on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Palestinian Territories and the Role of the EU, 1 June 2006	141
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Statement after Meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak, Sharm Esh-Sheikh, 4 June 2006	143

Congressman Michael McCaul of Texas, Draft Resolution to the US Congress, Condemning the Persecution of Palestinian Christians by the Palestinian Authority, 109 th Congress, 2 nd Session, H. Res., Washington DC, 6 June 2006	145
Jordanian King Abdullah II, Address to Graduates of Mu'ta University, Karak, Jordan, 7 June 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	146
Joint Policy Statement by Norway and Spain on the Conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, 7 June 2006	147
State of Palestine, Text of the Referendum on the National Conciliation Document ("Prisoners Document"), Ramallah, 10 June 2006	148
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN, Riyad Mansour, Identical Letters to the UN Secretary-General and the President of the UN Security Council, 13 June 2006	149
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, Washington, DC, 17 June 2006	150
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Speech at the 35 th Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, 20 June 2006	151
The Interim Follow-Up Committee for Palestinians of Foreign Citizenships Denied Entry to the Homeland, Letter to Foreign Consuls, 20 June 2006	154
Resolutions of the 33 rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, 19-21 June 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	155
Final Communiqué of the 33 rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, 19-21 June 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	165
Declaration of the EU-US Summit, Vienna, 21 June 2006	167
French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, Speech on the Middle East Situation, Paris, 22 June 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	169
Christian Laity Committee, Regarding a Proposed US House Resolution, 24 June 2006 ...	171
Israeli Political-Security Cabinet, Decisions Following the Abduction of Soldier Gilad Shalit, Jerusalem, 25 June 2006	172
Palestinian National Dialogue, National Conciliation Document of the Prisoners (Revised Version), 28 June 2006	172
Government of Israel, Reaction to the Palestinian 'Prisoners' Document' ("A Text Analysis"), 29 June 2006	175
G-8 Foreign Ministers Meeting, Chairman's Statement, Moscow, 29 June 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	177
Pope Benedict XVI, Statement on the Situation in the Holy Land, Vatican City, 30 June 2006	177
European Union Council, Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Middle East, Brussels, 3 July 2006	178

European Union Presidency, Declaration on the Middle East, 4 July 2006	178
European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Statement on the Situation in the Palestinian Territories, European Parliament, Strasbourg, 5 July 2006	179
UN Council for Human Rights, Resolution S-1/Res. 1 on the Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Special Session, New York, 6 July 2006	181
US National Lawyers Guild, Statement Condemning Israel's Crimes against Humanity, Washington, DC, 6 July 2006	182
Jerusalem Church Leaders, Joint Statement on the Crisis in Gaza, Jerusalem, 7 July 2006	183
British Notables, Statement Calling for an End to the Punishment of the Palestinians, London, 12 July 2006	184
UN Security Council, Draft Resolution S/2006/508, New York, 13 July 2006	185
Pope Benedict XVI, Statement on the Situation in the Holy Land, 16 July 2006	186
G-8 Summit Meeting, Statement on the Middle East, St. Petersburg, 16 July 2006	186
European Union Council, Presidency Conclusions, Declaration on the Middle East Peace Process, Brussels, 17 July 2006	188
Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), Statement Condemning Israel's War Crimes in Gaza and Lebanon, Ramallah, 17 July 2006	189
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East, 2744 th General Affairs and External Relations Meeting, Brussels, 17-18 July 2006	191
Vatican, Communiqué on the Worsening Situation in the Middle East, Press Office, Vatican City, 20 July 2006	192
World Council of Churches, General Secretary, Pastoral Letter on the Violence in the Middle East, 21 July 2006	192
US President George W. Bush, Radio Address to the Nation, Washington, DC, 22 July 2006	194
President Mahmoud Abbas, Statement after Meeting US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Ramallah, 25 July 2006	195
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Statement after Meeting President Mahmoud Abbas, Ramallah, 25 July 2006	196
Statement by the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, UN General Assembly, New York, 27 July 2006	196
Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, Statement on Israeli Terror in Lebanon, 5 August 2006 ...	198
Church-Related Organizations in the Holy Land, Statement on the Current Situation in Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, 7 August 2006	198

UN Security Council, Resolution 1701 on the Lebanon Crisis, New York, 11 August 2006	199
Latin Patriarch and Local Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, Statement on “The Jewish Declaration on Christian Zionism”, 22 August 2006	202
President Mahmoud Abbas, Statement Following a Meeting with Un Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Ramallah, 30 August 2006	203
International Donor Conference on the Humanitarian Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Chair’s Summary, Stockholm, 1 September 2006	204
European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Statement on the Situation in the Middle East, European Parliament Plenary, Strasbourg, 6 September 2006	205
European Parliament, Resolution on the Situation in the Middle East, Strasbourg, 7 September 2006	208
European Union Presidency, Statement on the Formation of a Government of National Unity in Palestine, 12 September 2006	211
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2749 th External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 15 September 2006	211
Quartet Statement on Middle East Peace, United Nations, New York, 20 September 2006 ...	212
Congress of South African Trade Unions, Resolution on the Middle East, 9 th Congress, Johannesburg, 21 September 2006	213
Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, Statement on Behalf of the European Union, UN Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question, New York, 21 September 2006	214
President Mahmoud Abbas, Address to the UN General Assembly, 61 st Session, New York, 21 September 2006	215
Statement by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal (Delivered by Ambassador Fawzi Shobokshi on His Behalf), 61 st UN General Assembly, New York, 22 September 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	218
Final Communiqué of the Annual Coordination Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, UN Headquarters, New York, 25 September 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	219
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Address to the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, Brussels, 4 October 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	222
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Keynote Address at the American Task Force on Palestine Inaugural Gala, “Helping Palestinians Build a Better Future”, Washington, DC, 11 October 2006	223
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East, External Relations Council Meeting, Luxembourg, 16-17 October 2006	225

European Union Presidency, Statement on Deaths of Civilians in Israeli Operation in Gaza, 8 November 2006	227
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Statement on the Us Veto of a UN Security Council Resolution on Israel, Washington, DC, 11 November 2006	227
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2761 st General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 13 November 2006	227
European Union, Statement on the Situation in Gaza, UN Human Rights Council, 3 rd Special Session, 15 November 2006	228
Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Speech before the Extraordinary Expanded Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Ministerial Level on the Israeli Aggression against the Palestinian People, Jeddah, 18 November 2006	230
President Mahmoud Abbas, Remarks after Meeting US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Jericho, 30 November 2006	232
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks after Meeting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Jericho, 30 November 2006	233
Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Remarks after Meeting US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Jerusalem, 30 November 2006	234
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks after Meeting Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Jerusalem, 30 November 2006	234
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks to the 2006 Forum for the Future, Dead Sea, Jordan, 1 December 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	234
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks to the Press, Gaza City, 2 December 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	235
PLO Executive Committee, Decisions during the Meeting to Study Alternative Options, Ramallah, 10 December 2006	236
European Union Council, Presidency Conclusions, Brussels, 14/15 December 2006 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	237
Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, Speech on Palestinian TV, 19 December 2006 ...	237
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, Washington, 22 December 2006	252
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks at a Joint Press Briefing with President Mahmoud Abbas, Ramallah, 19 January 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	252
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East, 2776 th Council Meeting, Brussels, 22 January 2007	253
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, Washington, DC, 2 February 2007	254

Mecca Accord between Hamas and Fateh, Mecca, 8 February 2007	255
Mecca Accord between Hamas and Fateh - Message of President Abbas to Prime Minister Haniyeh, Mecca, 8 February 2007	255
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, 9 February 2007	256
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East, 2780 th Council Meeting, Brussels, 12 February 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	256
Letters of Resignation and Commissioning Exchanged between Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and President Mahmoud Abbas Following the Mecca Accord, Gaza, 15-16 February 2007	257
Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Remarks after Meeting US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Jerusalem, 17 February 2007	258
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks after Meeting Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Jerusalem, 17 February 2007	259
Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Remarks after Meeting US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Ramallah, 18 February 2007	259
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks after Meeting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Ramallah, 18 February 2007	260
Joint Statement of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert after Meeting in Jerusalem, 19 February 2007	260
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, Berlin, 21 February 2007	261
Final Communiqué of the Expanded Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee at the Level of Foreign Ministers on the Israeli Aggressions Against Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 22 February 2007	261
Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Speech at the Expanded Emergency Executive Committee Ministerial Meeting on the Israeli Assaults on Al-Aqsa Mosque, Headquarters of the General Secretariat, Jeddah, 22 February 2007	263
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks after Meeting with President Mahmoud Abbas, Joint Press Briefing, Brussels, 23 February 2007	267
President Mahmoud Abbas, Remarks after Meeting with EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Joint Press Briefing, Brussels, 23 February 2007	268
European Union Council, Presidency Conclusions, Declaration on the Middle East Peace Process, Brussels, 8/9 March 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	268
Joint Co-Chairmen's Statement, 16 th EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Nuremberg, 15 March 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	269

Prime Minister-Elect Ismail Haniyeh, Speech before the Palestinian Legislative Council (Program of Palestinian Unity Government), Gaza, 17 March 2007	269
Palestinian Authority, Program of the National Unity Government, 17 March 2007	275
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, 21 March 2007	279
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks to the 19 th Arab League Summit, Riyadh, 28 March 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	280
League of Arab States, Summit Meeting, 19 th Session, Statement Relaunching the Arab Peace Initiative (Riyadh Declaration), Riyadh, 29 March 2007	281
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Speech on the current international situation and the role of the EU, Plenary of the European Parliament Brussels, 29 March 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	282
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2795 th /2796 th General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Luxembourg, 23-24 April 2007	283
Declaration of the EU-US Summit, Washington, 30 April 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	284
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks to the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee and Representatives of Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of the National Parliaments of the EU Member States, Brussels, 7 May 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	286
Joint Communiqué of the Cooperation Council, 17 th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, Riyadh, 8 May 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	286
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2800 th General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 14-15 May 2007	287
Declaration, Final Communiqué and Resolutions of the 34 th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony), Islamabad, 15-17 May 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	287
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks during a Joint Press Conference with President Mahmoud Abbas, Gaza, 24 May 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	297
Statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, John Dugard, 29 May 2007	298
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, Berlin, 30 May 2007	298
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, Statement Calling for a Human Rights Framework in Search for a Lasting Solution between Palestinians and Israelis, 5 June 2007	300
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks on the Middle East, European Parliament, Brussels, 6 June 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	301
Palestinian and Israeli Civil Society Organizations and Individuals, Statement Calling for Palestinian-Israeli Peace ("Florence Declaration"), Florence, 13 June 2007	302

Statement by the Middle East Quartet, 16 June 2007	303
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2809 th External Relations Council Meeting, Luxembourg, 18 June 2007	304
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech before the PLO Central Council Meeting, Ramallah, 20 June 2007	305
Statement by the Quartet Regarding the Quartet Representative, Washington, DC, 27 June 2007	311
US President George W. Bush, Statement Announcing a New Initiative on the Middle East, 16 July 2007	312
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech before the Palestinian Central Council, Ramallah, 18 July 2007	315
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, Lisbon, Portugal, 19 July 2007	319
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2817 th External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 23 July 2007	320
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the UN, Riyad Mansour, Identical Letters Addressed to the UN Secretary-General and the President of the UNSC, 26 July 2007	321
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, New York, 23 September 2007	323
Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, Statement to the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, New York, 24 September 2007	324
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting in New York, 24 September 2007	326
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech before the UN General Assembly, 62 nd Session, New York, 28 September 2007	326
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Address to the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Brussels, 3 October 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	330
Joint Communiqué, South Africa–European Union Strategic Partnership, Tshwane, 10 October 2007 [<i>Excerpts</i>]	332
Former US Officials, Joint Letter to President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on the Planned Annapolis Middle East Peace Conference, 10 October 2007	332
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2824 th General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Luxembourg, 15-16 October 2007	334
Palestine Liberation Organization, General Secretariat of the Executive Committee, Statement Regarding the Damascus Conference, 28 October 2007	335
European Union, Declaration by the European Union Presidency on Fuel Shipment Cuts to Gaza Strip, Brussels, 31 October 2007	336

US National Lawyers Guild, Resolution in Support of the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat and All Palestinian Political Prisoners, 11 November 2007	336
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks on the Annapolis Conference, Ramallah, 13 November 2007	338
Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Remarks on Annapolis, Cabinet Meeting, Jerusalem, 19 November 2007	338
Letter by 135 US House Members to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Calling for Efforts to Revive the Middle East Peace Process, 20 November 2007	339
US State Department Spokesman, Sean McCormack, Statement Announcing the Annapolis Conference, 20 November 2007	340
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2831 st General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 20 November 2007	340
Joint Paper by EU High Representative Javier Solana and EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner on 'Statebuilding for Peace in the Middle East: An EU Action Strategy', 20 November 2007	341
UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Statement on the 40 th Anniversary of the Adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), New York, 21 November 2007	343
UN Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Statement Approving Four Draft Texts, UN General Assembly, New York, 21 November 2007	345
US President George W. Bush, Statement on the Annapolis Conference, Washington, DC, 26 November 2007	347
Statement by the Middle East Quartet in Support of the Annapolis Conference, Washington, DC, 26 November 2007	348
US President George W. Bush, Remarks at the Annapolis Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, 27 November 2007	348
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Speech at the Annapolis Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, 27 November 2007	351
President Mahmoud Abbas, Speech at the Annapolis Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, 27 November 2007	355
Israeli Foreign Minister Livni Tzipi, Address to the Annapolis Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, 27 November 2007	359
Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Remarks on the Annapolis Conference, Annapolis (USA), 27 November 2007	362
Israeli-Palestinian Agreement to Formally Restart Mideast Peace Talks, US Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, 27 November 2007	363
European Union Council, Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 2840 th General Affairs and External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 10 December 2007	364

Statement by Israeli Organizations and Individuals, Calling to End the Siege of Gaza, 12 December 2007	365
Palestine Liberation Organization, General Secretariat, Press Statement Warning Syria against Interference in Palestinian Affairs, 12 December 2007	367
Israeli Cabinet, Statement in Support of Strengthening the Palestinian Authority, Jerusalem, 16 December 2007	367
Statement by the Middle East Quartet, Paris, 17 December 2007	367
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Remarks at the Palestinian Donors Conference, Paris, 19 December 2007	369
UN Security Council, Press Statement on the Situation in the Middle East, Urging Rapid Disbursement of Donors' Pledges, New York, 21 December 2007	370
<u>Map Annex</u>	371

Introduction

Palestine has enjoyed geographic, religious, and political centrality in the Middle East and has since the beginning of the last century been vulnerable to the plans and ambitions of foreign powers. The resulting conflicts have led to the dispersal and prolonged suffering of the Palestinian people, and during the past eight decades in particular the Palestinian people have fought continuously to defend their internationally recognized rights to freedom and independence.

The ambitions and policies of the various external powers involved over the year have had an undeniable impact on inter-Arab relations, and on the international relations of Arab states. They have also had a direct effect on shaping the history of Palestine and the evolution of its future. Despite this external pressure, the Palestinians have succeeded in defending and maintaining their Arab identity and political presence by organizing socio-economic institutions and a political infrastructure which have allowed them to challenge the power of various conquerors in the ongoing national struggle. Having legitimate representation forced other parties to recognize and engage with them despite attempts to deny them their rights to self-determination and national independence.

This volume is one of a series that organizes key political documents covering the time from the pre-Ottoman period to 2007. This volume covers the period from Israel's disengagement from Gaza up to the beginnings of the Annapolis conference. This brief introduction outlines the history of this period to provide a framework to guide the reader to the historical context of the papers.

Another Phase of Transition in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

In August of 2005, Israel's unilateral decision to remove 8,500 settlers living in the occupied Gaza Strip was ready for implementation. Sharon's plan had been met with its share of skepticism from both sides of the conflict and had endured numerous protests and outbursts of violence from right-wing Israelis. Still, the plan went forward and was completed in mid-September, one month after it had begun. The positive feelings in the Gaza Strip after the evacuation of all the Israeli settlers in part of the occupied territories were short lived, however, as it became clear that "disengagement" was not an accurate term for the plan. In fact, with none of their own citizens left in the Gaza Strip, Israeli politicians were now free to use the Israeli army to suffocate and demolish the entire Strip. There would certainly be tough times ahead for the people in Gaza.

By the start of 2006, the Palestinian legislative elections that had been postponed for over six months were finally held. Hamas furthered the electoral success they had enjoyed in the municipal elections of the year before, and the Palestinian political scene was on the verge of a major shift. In response to Hamas' victory, aid coming from the United States, Israel, the European Union, and other nations was cut off. By May, Ehud Olmert had assumed the post of Prime Minister and chosen to cease talking to the Palestinian Authority. The relations, or lack thereof, were further complicated in June with the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit by a Palestinian group in Gaza.

Palestinian In-Fighting and Renewed International Efforts

Intra-Palestinian fighting intensified in January 2007, as Hamas and Fateh failed to broker an agreement that would establish a unity government. The two sides met in Saudi Arabia in February, with Hamas leader Khaled Masha'al and President Abbas meeting to reconcile the differences between the two parties. The Mecca Agreement that came out of that meeting was not respected and would be soon forgotten. The factional fighting reached a head in June as Hamas gained control of Gaza in what they claimed was a preemptive maneuver to counter American and Israeli influence in the Palestinian political rift. Violence among all three sides - Israel, Hamas, and Fateh - claimed the lives of numerous Palestinians during the summer of 2007. Hamas solidified its hold on Gaza and scored a political coup by securing the release of BBC reporter Alan Johnston, who had been kidnapped by militants in Gaza four months earlier.

The latter half of 2007 was marked by renewed efforts from the international community to find a lasting peace for Palestinians. The Quartet on the Middle East appointed Tony Blair as its envoy on the same day that he stepped down as Britain's Prime Minister. The US led the way in restoring some aid to the Palestinians in order to bolster the standing of President Abbas. In July, a call by President Bush for an international meeting to be held in the fall was quickly endorsed by the UN and the members of the Quartet. By September, the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland was chosen as the venue, and formal invitations were sent out in late November. President Abbas described the meeting as an opportunity for a "new beginning", though his optimism was countered by skepticism among large sections of the Israeli, Palestinian, and international communities.

The conference was held at the end of November, with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice acting as the chief organizer. The stated goal was to set up a timetable for future negotiations on final status issues along the guidelines of the 2002 "Road Map for Peace". President Abbas, Prime Minister Olmert, and representatives from more than 30 nations, the UN Security Council (UNSC), and the Quartet were in attendance, and the meeting resulted in a draft resolution presented to the UNSC by the US, though it was quickly withdrawn due to Israeli objections. In the immediate aftermath, the question of whether Annapolis would bring about meaningful negotiations remained open, and Palestinians were left wondering whether their future would hold revived prospects for peace or another period of transition into further conflict.

A Final Note

Although we have endeavored to make this publication as reader/user friendly as possible, one should be aware that there is some inconsistency in terms of the spelling of non-English words - names and places (such as Haram Ash-Sharif or *Intifada*) – since we adhered, wherever possible, to the original version rather than apply our usual spelling rules. It is for the same reason that the volumes contain a number of minor typographical errors such as the omission of apostrophes, inconsistent capitalization, and spelling mistakes found in the originals.

Footnotes included in the volumes - excluding those marked "the ed." - are mostly those that appeared in the original texts though the readership note that the numbering will not necessarily be accordance with the original version.

15. Disengagement from Gaza – Annapolis Conference (2005-2007)

ISRAELI CABINET, COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE DISENGAGEMENT FROM THREE SETTLEMENTS IN GAZA AND ON THE SHAFI' AMR ATTACK, JERUSALEM, 7 AUGUST 2005

At the weekly Cabinet meeting today (Sunday), 7 August 2005:

1. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made the following remarks at the start of the meeting:

“Last Thursday, 4 August 2005, in Shfaram, a very serious event took place in which four city residents were murdered and others were wounded by an Israeli who perpetrated an act of terrorism in order to both harm relations between the populations and prevent the Disengagement Plan. I see this serious thing as an awful act. Both on my behalf and that of the Government, I would like to convey condolences to the families of the victims. On Friday, 5 August 2005, I announced that we will treat the families that were struck as families of terrorist victims, with all that entails. Last Thursday, I spoke with Shfaram Mayor Ersan Yassin and Arab community leaders and with all the Arab MKs, and I think that it is very important, both in general and during the difficult days that we are facing, to make every effort to enhance relations between Jews and Arabs, and this is how I intend to act. Everything must be done so that such events do not recur.

It is impossible to ignore the fact that there is awful incitement and a concomitant danger that such events will recur; therefore, I appeal to all those involved in the investigation - the Israel Police, the ISA and the security establishment - to do whatever is necessary to hasten the investigation and to take all necessary steps so that such events do not recur. We must continue to live with the Arab population here as always and we must create a network of relations that will enable us to live together. We must make an effort, each in his own field, to maintain quiet so that we will get through the difficult days ahead as well as through those after them, in a spirit of cooperation between the various sectors of the population. We will hear the results after the inquiries are made and we will decide together what will be our next steps.

The next issue that we will deal with today is the Disengagement Plan and the decision on starting the implementation. We will be briefed on the situation on the ground and whether or not there have been any changes. We will decide on the implementation of the evacuation that will begin - according to the Government's decision - on 15 August 2005 and which will be carried out in full. This is a very difficult and complicated move but it is very important for Israel and will be carried out in accordance with the timetable that has been decided upon by the Government and the Knesset.”

2. The Cabinet was briefed by security establishment and Disengagement Authority officials on the evacuation of communities and areas as per the Disengagement Plan. Prime Minister Sharon said that: “On 6 June 2004, the Cabinet approved the Disengagement Plan, at the center of which is the withdrawal from all four groups of communities included in the Plan. The Cabinet decided that it would reconvene shortly before the evacuation, consider the then existing circumstances and decide whether or not they are of sufficient weight to affect the evacuation.

In accordance with the Disengagement Plan Implementation Law, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and I will sign an order determining 15 August 2005 as the evacuation day.

We are approximately one week before evacuation day and it is now time to consider the circumstances in order to decide if they are of sufficient weight to affect the evacuation. I know that the security forces - the IDF and the Israel Police - are thoroughly prepared for the evacuation regarding both the possibility of an upsurge in Palestinian terrorism and the evacuation itself. The Disengagement Authority and the various Government ministries have made thorough preparations regarding the civilian aspects of the evacuation; there is a solution for every resident. The civilian and security establishments are ready for the evacuation and this will be part of our decision today.

Another part of our decision today will be to approve action by the security forces to implement the evacuation of the first group of communities - Morag, Netzarim and Kfar Darom. Evacuating the residents will be hard for all of us, but especially for the residents. For the residents themselves this is a very painful process and I understand their hearts and their pain. However, and despite all the hardship, the Disengagement Plan will allow us to preserve our vital national and security interests it creates an opportunity to get the regional diplomatic process moving and it is very important for the future of the State of Israel.”

GOC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Aharon Ze’evi (Farkash) and ISA Director Yuval Diskin briefed ministers on intelligence matters regarding Israel’s disengagement moves and their influence on the region, the Palestinians and Israeli citizens. Defense Minister Mofaz, IDF Chief-of-Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz, GOC Operations Maj.-Gen. Yisrael Ziv and Israel Police Commissioner Moshe Karadi briefed ministers on the plan for implementing the evacuation of the communities in the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria. Disengagement Authority Director Yonatan Basi briefed ministers on civilian preparations ahead of the evacuation of the residents.

The Cabinet thereupon decided as follows:

“In continuation of Cabinet decision #3281 of 20 February 2005, it is decided that:

- a. The Cabinet was briefed on security matters and matters regarding operational and civilian readiness ahead of the evacuation in the framework of the disengagement; considered the current overall circumstances; and decides that these circumstances are insufficient to affect the evacuation of the communities and areas in accordance with the 2005 Disengagement Plan Implementation Order (Northern Samaria) and the 2005 Disengagement Plan Implementation Order (Gaza Strip).
 - b. In continuation of the foregoing, to approve action by the security forces to implement the evacuation of the first group of communities (Morag, Netzarim and Kfar Darom).”
3. Toward the end of the meeting, Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his resignation from the Government and presented his letter of resignation to Prime Minister Sharon.



ISRAELI CABINET, COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE BEGINNING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISENGAGEMENT PLAN, JERUSALEM, 15 AUGUST 2005

At the weekly Cabinet meeting today (Monday), 15 August 2005:

1. Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, IDF Chief-of-Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz, Israel Police Commissioner Moshe Karadi, SELA Disengagement Authority Director Yonatan Basi and Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) Director-General Ilan Cohen briefed ministers on the beginning of the implementation of the Disengagement Plan.

Defense Minister Mofaz said that last night at midnight, the Gaza Strip was closed to entry, thus beginning the first stage of the Disengagement Plan. Notices regarding the start of the evacuation on Wednesday morning are now being delivered to homes. At several places, there is opposition to the entry of IDF forces and to the distribution of the notices. There is no intention of confronting

the residents. In principle, in communities where there is opposition, IDF forces will not enter to distribute the notices.

The IDF and the Israel Police are prepared according to the plan. In the next 48 hours, all assistance will be provided to evacuees who require it, regarding transportation, packing, etc.

Defense Minister Mofaz made it clear that the evacuation stage will begin Wednesday morning; the decision on which places the IDF and the Israel Police will evacuate first will be made by midnight Tuesday.

Defense Minister Mofaz said that the IDF's and the Israel Police's plans have been well prepared; forces have been ordered to take a moderate approach and render as much assistance as possible. He expressed the hope the foregoing would be carried out because we must all remember that this is a very difficult and painful process; however, he added that this is also a test of democracy in the State of Israel. The Defense Minister also expressed the hope that the disengagement would be implemented with minimal harm, psychological and otherwise, both to the settlers and to the security forces in the field.

IDF Chief-of-Staff Halutz briefed ministers on the activities of the security forces in the field and said that while there is opposition at the entrances to communities, it is non-violent and is mainly by young people who are not residents of Gush Katif. He added that there is dialogue with every community and said that for the most part, the residents are cooperative. In northern Samaria, two communities - Ganim and Kadim - have been completely evacuated. Last night there were demonstrations; several demonstrators - mainly from Shavei Shomron - were detained.

IDF Chief-of-Staff Halutz discussed the incident in which soldiers are suspected of having tried to take equipment from one of the evacuated communities. He made it clear that the IDF is checking the matter; the suspect soldiers have been arrested and will today face a proper judicial process. The message of this event is being passed on to all soldiers.

Israel Police Commissioner Karadi said that police forces are fully deployed along the fifth and sixth rings in the area in order to restrict the movement of those who intend to reach Gush Katif and disrupt the evacuation. The police have also reinforced their deployment throughout the country in order to prevent both terrorist activity and disturbances.

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom briefed ministers on the Palestinian Authority's (PA) management of everything regarding the disengagement. He said that after weeks of foot-dragging, it is possible to see increased efforts to coordinate the main points of the disengagement, and matters relating to the "day after" disengagement. The PA leadership has recently been acting to secure the coordinated and quiet implementation of the disengagement in order to strengthen itself in both the internal and diplomatic spheres.

Internal Palestinian struggles continue over issues relating to the administration of the Gaza Strip. Foreign Minister Shalom praised the work of quartet emissary James Wolfensohn and his team, who have invested much effort in order to assure the success of the Israeli move and of the Palestinians' dealing with the challenges of the "day after." This activity reflects the considerable international support for the Disengagement Plan.

Foreign Minister Shalom commented on his ministry's preparations for the battle for international awareness regarding the disengagement. He noted that, in this framework, the Foreign Ministry is filling a central role, with its main message being that the disengagement is an Israeli initiative that - despite the pain - has created a new opportunity for peace which must be taken advantage of. Foreign Minister Shalom updated ministers regarding Iran and the coup d'état in Mauritania.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon thanked the security forces for their difficult work, and expressed his appreciation for everything that is currently occurring on the ground.

Prime Minister Sharon reiterated that that this is a mission, which must be implemented in full, and that there are no changes in the timetable, or in the rules that have been determined for implementing this mission.

Prime Minister Sharon appealed to the forces on the ground and asked them to act with as much patience as possible, despite the difficulties, first and foremost with those being evacuated. The Prime Minister instructed that decisions based on implementing the disengagement be carried out in full. “When we see the actions carried out by youths, who did not come of their own accord, rather they were organized and sent by elements which repeat their non-involvement in violent activities - anyone who wants to live in a state where things are managed in such a way can ignore the situation. I do not intend to live in such a fashion, I see it as our responsibility to ensure that that life in Israel is carried on without violence, without coercion and without incitement, but in a manner acceptable in democratic countries.”

The Cabinet approved action by the security forces to implement the evacuation of the third group of communities in Gush Katif.

2. The Cabinet approved Communications Minister Dalia Itzik’s proposal and appointed attorneys Nurit Amitai and Munir Azzam, members of the Second Authority for Television and Radio Council, effective as of 15 August 2005.



ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY, STATEMENT ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COORDINATION ON THE EVE OF DISENGAGEMENT, 15 AUGUST 2005

1. THE WOLFENSOHN MISSION

Former World Bank president James D. Wolfensohn was appointed in May as the special coordinator of the Quartet (US, UN, EU, and Russia) for the Disengagement Plan. He has made five visits to the region so far: May 2-5; June 6-9 and 17-22; July 8-16; and July 29 - August 9.

Wolfensohn met in Israel with the prime minister, foreign minister, vice premier, defense minister, justice minister, and head of the National Security Council. On the Palestinian side, he met with PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, Muhammad Dahlan, Finance Minister Salam Fayyad, and other economic ministers. A number of trilateral meetings were also held with Dahlan and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz. Wolfensohn also met with representatives of international organizations including UNWRA and USAID, as well as foreign diplomats and Israeli and Palestinian businessmen.

Among the topics discussed were border crossings, “commercial corridors”, movement between the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria (West Bank), travel within Judea and Samaria, a Gaza airport and seaport, and the future of the vacated housing and hothouses.

Wolfensohn’s direct involvement spurred Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the internal Gaza crossings at Karni and Erez, on the demolition of homes, and regarding water, electricity, and communications infrastructure.

Status of the Wolfensohn mission on the eve of Disengagement:

- a. Border crossings and commercial corridor - Israeli and Palestinian technical teams discussed in concrete terms the upgrading the Karni and Erez crossings, in addition to the establishment of a separate crossing for agricultural produce.
- b. Movement between Gaza and the West Bank - The cabinet approved the interim solution of accompanied convoys, comprising 25 trucks. For the long term Israel is proposing a rail link between Erez (Gaza) and Tarkumiya (West Bank).

- c. Travel within Judea and Samaria - Wolfensohn urged freedom of movement among Palestinian localities as a spur to economic growth. In this context, the removal of four settlements in northern Samaria during disengagement will be accompanied by the removal of roadblocks and an immediate improvement in mobility.
- d. Air and sea ports - There is agreement in principle on the building of a seaport (its construction is to utilize the rubble from the demolition of settlers' homes in the Gaza Strip). Operation of the port is still under negotiation. No agreement has been reached yet on the reopening of the Gaza airport.
- e. Demolition of Israeli homes in Gaza - US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced in Jerusalem on June 19 that about 1,200 Jewish homes would be destroyed at the agreement of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. "The view is that there are better land uses for the Palestinians to better address their housing needs," said Rice, adding that the parties would "work towards a plan for destruction and clean-up."
- f. Hotheuses - Last week representatives of Gush Katif farmers signed a \$14 million deal to sell some 75% of their hotheuses to a private international fund, the Economic Cooperation Foundation, which will transfer the structures to the Palestinian Authority. The ECF coordinated private donations to fund the hothouse transfer, which assures that some 4,000 Palestinian workers will retain their jobs.

2. OTHER ISSUES

- a. The Philadelphi Corridor: The cabinet is set to approve the withdrawal from the Israeli controlled Philadelphi Corridor (located between the Gaza Strip and the Sinai) allowing contiguity between the Palestinians and Egypt.
- b. International border crossing - Israel would like to move the Rafah international border crossing to Kerem Shalom, with the cooperation of the Palestinians and the Egyptians. If this cannot be arranged, the necessary customs and security procedures would have to be transferred to Israel's boundary with the Gaza Strip at the Karni and Erez crossings, following the implementation of the Disengagement Plan and the withdrawal from the Philadelphi Corridor.



EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY, STATEMENT ON SHOOTINGS IN THE WEST BANK AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S DELEGATION TO ISRAEL, 17 AUGUST 2005

The Presidency condemns the shooting today of three Palestinian civilians near Shiloh, West Bank, by an Israeli extremist. We offer condolences to the families of those killed and injured.

The Presidency welcomes the restraint shown by Palestinians and Israelis since the start of the process of disengagement from Gaza and the northern West Bank. It urges both sides to continue to do so in the face of such provocation.

The Presidency reiterates its full support for this process.



REPORT OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR OF THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL SINCE 1967 (UNGA A/60/271), 18 AUGUST 2005 [EXCERPTS]

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report submitted by John Dugard, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, in accordance with Commission resolutions 1993/2 A and 2005/7.

SUMMARY

During the past year, Israel's decision to withdraw Jewish settlers and troops from Gaza has attracted the attention of the international community. This focus of attention on Gaza has allowed Israel to continue with the construction of the wall in Palestinian territory, the expansion of settlements and the de-Palestinization of Jerusalem with virtually no criticism. This report focuses principally on these matters.

Although uncertainty surrounds the full extent and consequences of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, it seems clear that Gaza will remain occupied territory subject to the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention) as a result of Israel's continued control of the borders of Gaza. The withdrawal of Jewish settlers from Gaza will result in the decolonization of Palestinian territory but not result in the end of occupation.

In its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice held that the wall currently being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is contrary to international law. It accordingly held that construction of the wall should cease and that those sections of the wall that had been completed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory should be dismantled. The Government of Israel has paid no heed to the advisory opinion and continues with the construction of the wall.

The wall has serious consequences for Palestinians living in the neighbourhood of the wall. Many thousands are separated from their agricultural lands by the wall and are denied permits to access their lands. Even those who are granted permits frequently find that gates within the wall do not open as scheduled. As a result, Palestinians are gradually leaving land and homes that they have occupied for generations.

Most Jewish settlers in the West Bank are now situated between the Green Line (the accepted border between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory) and the wall. Moreover, existing settlements in this zone - known as the "closed zone" - are expanding and new settlements are being built. Emboldened by the support they receive from the Government and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), settlers have become more aggressive towards Palestinians and settler violence is on the increase.

The construction of the wall, the de-Palestinization of the "closed zone" and the expansion of settlements make it abundantly clear that the wall is designed to be the border of the State of Israel and that the land of the "closed zone" is to be annexed.

Israel has embarked upon major changes in Jerusalem in order to make the city more Jewish. Jewish settlements within East Jerusalem are being expanded and plans are afoot to link Jerusalem with the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim with a population of 35,000, which will effectively cut the West Bank in two. Palestinian contiguity in East Jerusalem is being destroyed by the presence of Jewish settlements and by house demolitions. Some 55,000 Palestinians presently resident in the municipal area of East Jerusalem have been transferred to the West Bank by the construction of the wall. The clear purpose of these changes is to remove any suggestion that East Jerusalem is a Palestinian entity capable of becoming the capital of a Palestinian State.

The international community has proclaimed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the need to create a Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. This vision is unattainable without a viable Palestinian territory. The construction of the wall, the expansion of settlements and the de-Palestinization of Jerusalem threaten the viability of a Palestinian State. The occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues to result in major violations of human rights. There are some 8,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, whose treatment is alleged to fall well below internationally accepted standards. Freedom of movement is radically undermined by over 600 military checkpoints. Social and economic rights are violated. A quarter of the Palestinian population is unemployed and half the population lives below the official poverty line. Health and education services suffer and Palestinians have severe difficulties in accessing safe water. Housing remains a serious problem as a result of house demolitions conducted by the IDF in previous years. Women suffer disproportionately from these violations of human rights.

In 2004 the International Court of Justice handed down an advisory opinion in which it condemned as illegal not only the construction of the wall but many features of the Israeli administration of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The advisory opinion was endorsed by the General Assembly on 20 July 2004 in resolution ES-10/15. Since then little effort has been made by the international community to compel Israel to comply with its legal obligations as expounded by the International Court. The Quartet, comprising the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, appears to prefer to conduct its negotiations with Israel in terms of the so-called road map with no regard to the advisory opinion. The road map seems to contemplate the acceptance of certain sections of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the inclusion of major Jewish settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in Israeli territory. This process places the United Nations in an awkward situation as it clearly cannot be a party to negotiations that ignore the advisory opinion of its own judicial organ. [...]

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 8 February 2005 the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, agreed on a ceasefire in terms of which Palestine agreed to stop all acts of violence against Israelis and Israel agreed to cease all military activity against Palestinians. This raised hopes of a peace that would ultimately result in negotiations leading to the creation of a Palestinian State. The past six months have seen the maintenance of an uneasy peace. Suicide bombings in Israel have not ceased: on 25 February a suicide bombing took place in Tel Aviv, killing four and wounding 50 persons and on 12 July a suicide bombing took place in Netanya, killing five and wounding 90. There have been over 200 attacks by non-State Palestinian actors against Israeli targets but few casualties have resulted from such attacks. Violence against Palestinians has also continued: over 70 Palestinians have been killed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF); over 500 have been wounded; and targeted assassinations have resumed. There have been over 2,000 IDF incursions into Palestinian population centres. The main focus of attention during this period has been the withdrawal of Jewish settlers from Gaza. This event, which has caused major divisions in Israeli society, has understandably received considerable attention from the international community. This attention has, however, been at the expense of major violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the West Bank. Despite the fact that, according to a report of Switzerland in its capacity as depositary of the Geneva Conventions transmitted to the General Assembly on 30 June 2005, “the vast majority of States reaffirm that the applicable legal framework and the obligations of the parties [to the Geneva Conventions] were determined by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004 and cannot be called into question” (A/ES-10/304, annex, para. 22). The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which was confirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, has been largely overlooked. This has allowed Israel to continue with the construction of the wall in Palestinian territory, the expansion of settlements and the de-Palestinization of Jerusalem. This report will focus principally on these matters.
2. In this report the term “wall” is used in preference to the more neutral terms “barrier” and “fence”. The term “wall” was carefully and deliberately used by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (see A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1). The Special Rapporteur sees no reason to depart from this language.

II. VISIT OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

3. The Special Rapporteur visited the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 26 June to 3 July 2005. He visited Gaza, where he had the opportunity to visit the Karni crossing and to view the destruction caused to Gaza International Airport. The Special Rapporteur visited the Palestinian side of the Rafah terminal crossing between Gaza and Egypt where he met a busload of returning Gaza residents who had waited on the Egyptian side of the border for three to four days in the sun as a result of slow processing by the Israeli immigration officials. (B’Tselem, in a recent publication entitled *One Big Prison* has described the treatment of Gazan residents by Israeli officials at the Rafah terminal as “arbitrary and disproportionate”.) While in Gaza the Special Rapporteur met with representatives of United Nations agencies, of Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and with private individuals.

4. The Special Rapporteur then proceeded to visit the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. He visited Ramallah, Hebron, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. He also visited communities in areas adjacent to the wall in the regions of Qalqiliya (Jayyous), Tulkarem (Ras), Hebron (Imneizel), Jerusalem (Beit Surik, Beit Dukku, Anata, Abu-Dis, A-Ram, Kalandiya) and Bethlehem (An Nu'man). He met with communities affected by settlements in Hebron, At Tuwani, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, the Special Rapporteur visited Silwan where 88 houses are subject to demolition orders. During this part of the visit the Special Rapporteur met with representatives of the Palestinian Authority, United Nations agencies, Israeli and Palestinian NGOs and private individuals, many of whom had suffered personally as a result of the construction of the wall and settlements.

III. GAZA

5. At the time of writing, the situation in Gaza is highly volatile. Settler groups opposed to the withdrawal of some 8,000 to 9,000 settlers have confronted the IDF in a violent manner. At the same time, Palestinian militants have fired rockets into neighbouring Israel and Jewish settlements and engaged in violence against the Palestinian Authority. The withdrawal of settlers is planned to take place between mid-August and mid-September and it seems that this withdrawal is destined to be accompanied by further violence.

6. This volatile situation is likely to give rise to an addendum to the present report. At this stage, it is only possible to raise questions about the process of withdrawal and the future status of Gaza.

7. Great uncertainty surrounds the details of the withdrawal. While one can understand the need for some element of surprise on the part of the IDF in order to carry out the withdrawal, the consequences of this uncertainty have serious implications for Palestinians. It seems highly likely that the withdrawal will result in major disruptions to road traffic and freedom of movement which, in turn, will have serious implications for the provision of foodstuffs, access to hospitals, schools and places of employment. In these circumstances, it is difficult to understand why the Government of Israel has not made plans with the Palestinian Authority to avoid a humanitarian disaster in the Palestinian community during the one-month withdrawal period. Fears have also been voiced that insufficient account has been taken of unexploded ordnance and landmines in the vicinity of settlements and the presence of asbestos materials in some of the settlement houses scheduled for destruction.

8. The future status of Gaza is unclear. It seems unlikely that the United Nations will be in a position to issue a statement proclaiming the end of Israeli occupation of Gaza after the withdrawal as a result of the continued control to be exercised by Israel over Gaza. Furthermore, the West Bank and Gaza constitute a "single territorial unit" in terms of the Oslo Agreements and it would be incomprehensible if a statement proclaiming the end of occupation for Gaza were made without addressing the continued occupation of the West Bank. There is no clarity in respect of Israel's plans or intentions for the future of Gaza. At the time of writing, the Palestinian Authority remains in doubt over the precise forms of control to be exercised by Israel and how much freedom will be allowed to Gaza in its relations with the outside world and the West Bank. Israel has stated that it will relinquish control of the Philadelphi route between Gaza and Egypt if Egypt is prepared to patrol its side of the border. Israel has announced that Gaza Airport may not be reopened. While it is prepared to contemplate the construction of a harbour in Gaza, it seems that Israel will claim the right to police the territorial sea of Gaza. There is also a suggestion that Israel will build a concrete barrier in the sea along the border between Gaza and Israel. The future of the movement of persons and goods between Gaza and the West Bank and between Gaza and Egypt is still unknown. Israel has to date refused proposals that persons be allowed to travel freely between Gaza and the West Bank. Indeed, family reunification of the people of Gaza and the West Bank remains unacceptable to Israel. Goods will not be allowed to move freely from Gaza to the West Bank and vice versa. A proposal that a sunken highway in a 5-metre-deep trench surrounded by fences be constructed between Gaza and the West Bank to allow the passage of Palestinian persons and goods is still subject to discussion. It is highly possible that as far as goods are concerned, the cumbersome and strictly controlled back-to-back system of transport of goods at present practiced at the Karni crossing will remain in force. Israel is reluctant to allow free passage of persons and goods between Gaza and Egypt. It has suggested that the present Rafah terminal between Gaza and Egypt be moved to a crossing point at Kerem Shalom where the boundaries of Israel, Egypt and Gaza meet as this would allow Israel to retain control over access to Gaza. Customs arrangements are still the subject of negotiation. In all these

- circumstances, the inevitable conclusion to be drawn is that Israel is not prepared to relinquish control over the borders of Gaza. Moreover, the IDF has announced that it will not hesitate to intervene militarily in Gaza after the withdrawal of settlers if Israel's security so requires.
9. It seems clear therefore that Gaza will remain occupied territory subject to the appropriate provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention). The jurisprudence of post-war Germany shows that the test for occupation is that of continued control. In the *Hostages Trial (United States of America v. Wilhelm List et al., 1949)* a military tribunal stated that it was not necessary for the occupying Power to occupy the whole territory so long as it "could at any time (it) desired assume physical control of any part of the country".¹
 10. The withdrawal of Jewish settlers from Gaza should be seen as the decolonization of Palestinian territory. This does not affect Israeli control of the territory, which will remain. Consequently, Israel will remain an occupying Power in respect of Gaza, subject to the rules of international humanitarian law applicable to occupied territory. The humanitarian crisis which Gaza has suffered since 2000 will not disappear after Israel withdraws. Continued control will prevent economic recovery and Gaza will remain an imprisoned territory in which economic and social rights suffer seriously.
 11. The uncertainty surrounding Israel's post-withdrawal plans has given rise to suggestions that Israel intends to delay decisions on matters such as customs, air and sea traffic, and the movement of persons and goods for an indefinite period. Slow decisions on such matters will further distract international attention from Israel's territorial expansion in the West Bank. Twelve months of protracted negotiations between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on these matters will allow Israel to complete construction of the wall, the consolidation of settlement blocks, and fundamental changes to the character of Jerusalem.

IV. THE WALL

12. In its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004 the International Court of Justice held that the wall presently being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, is contrary to international law; that Israel is under an obligation to cease the building of the wall on Palestinian territory and to dismantle it forthwith; that Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; that all States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall; that all States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention are obliged to ensure that Israel complies with the provisions of that Convention; and that the United Nations should consider what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall. On 20 July 2004 the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/15 in which it demanded that Israel comply with the legal obligations as mentioned in the advisory opinion. The resolution was adopted by 150 votes in favour, 6 against with 10 abstentions.
13. The Government of Israel refuses to accept the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. It does, however, pay some attention to the decision of its own High Court in the *Beit Sourik Village Council v. The Government of Israel* of 30 June 2004 which held that while the wall might be built to ensure security, it should not impose undue hardships on Palestinians. Unfortunately, this decision has not been applied to most sections of the wall constructed before the decision was handed down in July 2004.
14. On 20 February 2005 the Government of Israel marginally modified the planned route of the wall. In terms of this decision the wall, once completed, will be 670 km long compared with 622 km of the prior route. The new route runs for 135 km on the Green Line compared to 48 km of the prior route. The new route of the wall will follow the Green Line, or be close to the Green Line, in the locality of the Hebron Hills. It will penetrate more deeply into Palestinian territory further north to include settlements in the Gush Etzion block near Bethlehem, housing over 50,000 settlers. It has also been decided to include the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim and Ariel on the Israeli side of the wall. This will result in some 10 per cent of Palestinian land being included in Israel. (The previous route resulted in the seizure of 12.7 per cent of the West Bank.) The wall will enclose,

¹ United Nations War Crimes Commission, *Law Reports of Trials of War Criminals*, vol. III, 1949, p.56.

- on the Israeli side, 170,000 settlers (not including those in East Jerusalem) and 49,000 Palestinians, living in 38 villages.
15. To date 213 km of the wall have been built from the northern border of the West Bank near Tubas to roughly Elkana in the centre, plus two segments in Jerusalem. Construction is still under way between Elkana and Jerusalem; around the settlements of Ariel and Immanuel; in and around East Jerusalem; and from Gush Etzion to Metzudat Yehuda on the southern border of the West Bank in Hebron Governorate. Although construction of the wall has progressed rapidly since the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, rebuked the defence establishment on 6 July for “taking too long” in the construction of the wall and instructed it to speed up its construction since there were no financial constraints. Petitions to the High Court against the course of the wall have been largely responsible for delays in the completion of the wall. An injunction restraining the building of the wall around the settlement of Ariel which will extend the wall 22 km into the West Bank was lifted on 17 May 2005 and work on the construction of the wall around the eastern border of this “finger” into Palestinian territory has been started. That Israel intends to enclose Ariel within the wall is clear from a statement by Mr. Sharon on 21 July 2005 that the Ariel block “will be part of the State of Israel forever” and that “it will always be an inseparable part of the State of Israel”.
 16. The Special Rapporteur viewed the wall and construction sites of the wall in many areas. He visited the wall near Jayyous and Ras in Qalandiya and Tulkarem districts; around Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem; along the road to Kalandiya in A-Ram; over the hills of Abu-Dis and Anata; and Imneizel in the south Hebron Hills. The wall, or barrier as some prefer to call it, has been built without concern for the environment. It is ugly, and has resulted in the destruction of olive groves, citrus orchards and grazing fields and the disfigurement of towns and villages. In previous reports the Special Rapporteur has expressed the view that the wall seems to have been built without regard to security considerations in many areas (for instance, in some areas the wall is built in the valley below Palestinian villages). The most recent visit to the wall has confirmed this view.
 17. The zone between the wall and the Green Line, the internationally accepted border between Israel and the West Bank, is known as the “closed zone” or “seam zone”. Within this zone, live some 49,000 Palestinians. A greater number of Palestinians, however, live on the West Bank side of the wall while their lands are in the “closed zone”. Both these Palestinian communities are seriously affected by the wall. Those living within the “closed zone” have difficulty in accessing family, hospitals, schools, markets and employment within the West Bank. Those living on the West Bank side of the wall require permits to access their own agricultural land. Whereas in previous years such persons were mainly refused permits for security reasons, today it appears that permits are mainly denied when the owner or user of land is unable to provide convincing evidence of ownership or title to the land. A landowner applying for a permit to access his own land must submit a land registration certificate. However, proof of ownership is alien to the traditional Palestinian land ownership system and has been resisted by Palestinian landowners over many generations. In part this can be ascribed to the fact that the registration of land under the Ottomans was very slow and little progress was made in respect of land registration during the British Mandate period or during the period of Jordanian rule before 1967. It is therefore not uncommon that people are unaware of the actual status of the land they are cultivating as they have not previously been required to prove ownership of the land. Much of this land has been held in families for generations according to traditional land tenure systems without registration. In these circumstances the demand for proof of land ownership or title to land is often an insurmountable obstacle. Permits are refused on this ground and because the applicant is considered to be too distant a relation of the landowner. In the Governorate of Tulkarem, in the period 1 March to 31 May 2005, 58 per cent of 315 applicants from Attil, Deir al Ghusun and Illar received permits; 22 per cent of 900 applicants from Akkaba received permits; and 19 per cent of 1,222 applicants from Baqa ash Sharqiya, Nazlat Issa and Abu Nar received permits. In Qaffin, with a population of 9,000, 600 families - between 3,000 and 3,600 people - have land and trees on the other side of the fence. In May 2005, 1,050 villagers applied for permits to access their land. Only 70 were granted permits, 600 received a negative reply and the rest, 380 people, received no reply at all. The reason most frequently given for rejection was that the applicant was too distant a relation to the landowner. Several sons and grandsons of landowners were denied permits because they were considered “distant relatives”. Between January

- and June 2005, some 3,545 applications for permits were submitted in the Tulkarem area. Of these, 2,404 were refused, mostly on the grounds of inadequate proof of relationship to the owner.
18. To aggravate the situation, the 25 gates that are supposed to provide access to the “closed zone” are frequently locked or opened in an arbitrary manner. Permit holders often have to wait for many hours for gates to open and sometimes they do not open at all. In May and June 2005 fires broke out in the “closed zone” but the IDF denied farmers access to their lands to put out the fire.
 19. Houses too close to the wall are sometimes destroyed. On 27 July 2005 houses in the area of the town of Al-Khadr were destroyed.
 20. Many persons whose land is adjacent to the “closed zone” find refused permits, closed gates and destroyed homes too much to bear. This explains why Palestinians are gradually leaving land and homes that they have occupied for generations. Figures are uncertain but it seems that 11,000 persons have already been displaced as a result of the construction of the wall. This new generation of displaced persons creates a new category of Palestinian refugee. The neglect and abandonment of land will allow the Israeli authorities to seize the land under the terms of an old Ottoman law and to hand it over to the settlers.

A. *Settlements and the wall*

21. Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza are illegal. They violate article 49 (6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention and their illegality has been confirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion on the wall. There can therefore be no justification for the retention of settlements. A fortiori, the expansion of settlements must be completely unacceptable to the international community.
22. Most settlers and settlements in the West Bank are to be found on the Israeli side of the wall. Some 170,000 settlers live in 56 settlements in the “closed zone”, that is 76 per cent of the settler population in the West Bank. New settlements or the expansion of existing settlements are being planned for the “closed zone”. The Special Rapporteur saw evidence of such an expansion near Jayyous where the settlement of Zufin is being expanded to encroach further on the fields of Jayyous farmers in the “closed zone”.
23. The expansion of settlements is clear to anyone who visits settlement sites. Cranes generally mark the skyline of settlements and there is abundant evidence of building activity. The figures confirm settlement growth and expansion. On 8 June 2005 the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics reported that Israel had built almost twice as many settler homes in the first quarter of 2005 as in the same period of 2004. At the same time, housing starts in Israel itself fell 6 percent from the first quarter of 2004.
24. Three major settlement blocks, the Gush Etzion block, the Ma’aleh Adumim block and the Ariel block - all of which are to be surrounded by the wall - will effectively divide Palestinian territory into cantons or Bantustans. These cantons will be linked by special roads or tunnels. This results in transportation contiguity as opposed to territorial contiguity. This means that Palestinians will be able access different parts of the West Bank but the territorial unity essential for the creation of a viable State will be absent.
25. The construction of the wall, the de-Palestinization of the “closed zone” and the expansion and construction of settlements in the “closed zone” make it abundantly clear that the wall is designed to be the border of the State of Israel and that the land of the “closed zone” is to be annexed. Already members of the IDF inform international representatives visiting the “closed zone” that it is part of Israeli territory. This is understandable as, after all, Israelis have free access to the “closed zone” whereas Palestinians require special permits to enter this zone. Further evidence of the fact that Israel views the wall as an international boundary is provided by the construction of check-point terminals in the wall which resemble international crossing points in size and structure. (Like the Karni crossing in Gaza, these terminals will also practice “back-to-back” crossing.) Writing in *Ha’aretz* of 12 July 2005, Knesset Member Ran Cohen stressed that Israelis increasingly refuse to accept the Green Line as the border between Israel and the West Bank. Further proof of Israel’s intentions was provided by Mr. Sharon during his visit to Paris on 28 July 2005. Addressing a meeting of the Jewish community, Mr. Sharon stated that thanks to the disengagement from Gaza “Israel has gained unprecedented political achievements” including “a guarantee that the major population centres in Judea and Samaria [that is, the West Bank] will remain part of Israel in any final status agreement; and there will be no return to the 1967 borders...”.

26. In August 2005 Israel will withdraw Jewish settlers from four settlements in the northern West Bank: Ganim, Kadim, Homesh and Sa-Nur. Israeli Government spokesmen have vehemently denied that any further withdrawal of settlers from the West Bank is contemplated.

B. Settler violence

27. Statistics show that settler violence is on the increase. Sixty-eight incidents of settler violence were reported in May 2005 and 67 in June. Prosecutions of settlers are rare, and it seems that settlers are able to terrorize Palestinians and destroy their land with impunity. As on previous visits to Hebron, the Special Rapporteur was subjected to abuse from settlers. The Special Rapporteur also had occasion to visit the settlement at Tel Rumeida in Hebron. This settlement in the middle of Hebron has recently been expanded and there is increased pressure on the part of the settlers to drive out their Palestinian neighbours by a process of terrorization. A visit to the community of At-Tuwani provided further evidence of settler violence. Schoolchildren are beaten and terrorized by settlers on the way to school and wells and fields have been poisoned. Crops have been destroyed, sheep and goats stolen and poisoned. The police and IDF do little to protect cave dwellers, peasants and shepherds in this region.

V. JERUSALEM

28. East Jerusalem is not part of Israel. On the contrary, it is occupied territory, subject to the Fourth Geneva Convention. Unfortunately, Israel's illegal attempt at annexation of East Jerusalem has obscured this truth. As a consequence world public opinion tends, incorrectly, to treat Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem as different from that of the West Bank and Gaza.
29. Israel has embarked upon major changes to the character of Jerusalem. In essence, these changes are designed to reduce the number of Palestinians in the city and to increase the Jewish population of the city and thereby to undermine Palestinian claims to East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian State. That this is the purpose of the wall in Jerusalem was acknowledged by the Israeli Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, Haim Ramon, on 10 July when he stated that the route of the wall would make Jerusalem "more Jewish". He added, "The Government is bringing security to the city and will also make Jerusalem the capital of a Jewish and democratic State of Israel."
30. Jewish settlements within East Jerusalem are to be expanded. Already there are some 184,000 settlers in East Jerusalem who will find themselves between the wall and the Green Line. Now, the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, with a population of 35,000, is to be joined to Jerusalem by some 3,600 housing units to be constructed in the so-called "E1" area. These units will accommodate some 20,000 settlers. New settlements are also being built near Walajeh (Nof Yael), Har Homa (Har Homa II), Jabel Mukabbir (Nof Zion), Abu Dis (Kidmat Zion), Binyamin (Geva Binyamin) and Giv'at Ze'ev (Agan ha-Ayalot) to form a Jewish urban belt around Palestinian East Jerusalem.
31. Palestinian contiguity in East Jerusalem is to be disrupted by the demolition of Palestinian houses, the expansion of settlements and the creation of parks. This is evident in the Silwan region where 88 houses have been subjected to demolition orders to make way for a park. This will further the linking up of Jewish settlements in Silwan and adjacent areas, thereby destroying the contiguity of Palestinian neighbourhoods. Even in the Old City, Jewish settlements are expanding.
32. Some 230,000 Palestinians live in East Jerusalem. The wall in the Jerusalem area is being constructed to transfer many Palestinians with Jerusalem identity documents to the West Bank. This is best seen in the transfer of the Palestinian neighbourhood of Shuafat (which includes 11,000 refugees), and of Salaam and Dar Khamis neighbourhoods in Anata, presently within Jerusalem's municipal boundary, to the West Bank. This will result in the transfer of some 55,000 Palestinians from Jerusalem to the West Bank. To this figure we must add about another 50,000 people who have Jerusalem identity cards who live in the satellite communities of East Jerusalem outside the Jerusalem municipal boundary such as Al-Ram, who migrated to such communities because they could not find housing inside the city owing to the expropriation of land and building restrictions. This means that the wall harms over 40 per cent of East Jerusalem's 230,000 Palestinians. The Israeli historian Tom Segev states, "What is happening today in Jerusalem goes beyond security needs and reflects the essence of the original Zionist dream. Maximum territory, minimum Arabs."
33. In a recent report titled *The Jerusalem Powder Keg*, the International Crisis Group states: "Stretching municipal boundaries, annexing Palestinian land and building new Jewish neighbour-

hoods/settlements, Israel has gradually created a municipal area several times Jerusalem's earlier size. It has also established new urban settlements outside the municipal boundary to surround the city, break contiguity between East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and strengthen links between these settlements, West Jerusalem and the rest of Israel" (p.i.).

34. The changes described above may serve the political interests of Israel, but they do so at the expense of the Palestinian population. Not infrequently, family members have different identity documents. The wife may have Jerusalem identification while her husband may hold West Bank identification. Whether they will be permitted to live together remains to be seen. At present many Jerusalem identity holders are employed in the West Bank. Uncertainty surrounds the question whether they will be permitted to cross freely into the West Bank or whether they will have to choose between the West Bank and Jerusalem. Access to schools and hospitals will also present serious difficulties.
35. Jerusalem is an historical city of great beauty. The wall has done much to disfigure the city. Those responsible for planning and constructing the wall in Jerusalem have done so with complete disregard for the environment. All this has been done in order to transform Jerusalem into a Jewish city.

VI. THE WALL, SETTLEMENTS AND SELF-DETERMINATION

36. In its advisory opinion the International Court of Justice stressed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. In recent times politicians of all persuasions have given support to a two-State solution, with the States of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. This vision is unattainable without a viable Palestinian territory. The construction of the wall, the expansion of settlements and the de-Palestinization of Jerusalem are incompatible with the two-State solution. Interlocutors within both Israel and the West Bank warned the Special Rapporteur that with the two-State solution becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible, consideration should be given to the establishment of a binational Palestinian State. The demography of the region increasingly points to such an outcome.
37. In its advisory opinion the International Court of Justice stated that it noted "the assurance given by Israel that the construction of the wall does not amount to annexation and that the wall is of a temporary nature". The Court, however, considered "that the construction of the wall and its associated regime create a 'fait accompli' on the ground that could well become permanent, in which case, and notwithstanding the formal characterization of the wall by Israel, it would be tantamount to de facto annexation" (para. 121). It is highly arguable that this stage has now been reached. The prohibition of the annexation of territory by force is, of course, one of the most fundamental principles of international law.

VII. OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

38. The Special Rapporteur has focused in this report on what he considers to be the principal violations of human rights. The wall and settlements seriously undermine the fundamental right of self-determination of the Palestinian people upon which all other rights depend. In large measure, the wall and settlements are a consequence of occupation. The regime of occupation by definition results in a violation of human rights. A prolonged occupation of the kind to which the Palestinian people have been subjected for 38 years inevitably poses a threat to most basic human rights. This is confirmed by the Palestinian experience.

A. Freedom of the person

39. In the past year Israel has released some 900 Palestinian prisoners. In the same period over 1,000 new prisoners have been taken. Consequently, there are still over 8,000 prisoners in Israeli jails. Of this number, some 120 are women. Over 300 children under the age of 18 are in Israeli detention centres. Forty per cent of them have been sentenced to imprisonment and 60 per cent are in pre-trial detention. Over 600 of those imprisoned are in administrative detention, that is, they are persons held without trial. Family visits remain a serious problem. As prisons are situated in Israel and many Palestinians are denied admission to Israel, a majority of prisoners receive no family visits. While the future of Palestinian prisoners from the West Bank and Gaza is subject to scrutiny under the Sharm el-Sheikh Agreement, Palestinian prisoners from East Jerusalem are overlooked. Prison conditions are harsh: prisoners live in overcrowded and poorly ventilated cells which they generally leave for only two hours a day. Allegations of torture and inhuman treat-

ment of detainees and prisoners continue. Such treatment includes beatings, shackling in painful positions, kicking, prolonged blindfolding, denial of access to medical care, exposure to extreme temperatures and inadequate provision of food and water.

40. There are very few prosecutions of IDF soldiers for injury to Palestinians, despite the high number of casualties at the hands of the IDF. The impunity of the IDF was taken one step further in 2005 by a law passed by the Knesset in 2005, with retrospective effect to 2000, which seriously restricts the right of Palestinians to sue for damages incurred during the intifada. Palestinians will only be able to sue for traffic-related claims and cases in which a Palestinian suffered physical harm while being held in military detention.

B. Freedom of movement

41. Checkpoints in both the West Bank and Gaza continue to seriously undermine the freedom of movement. As of April 2005, the number of checkpoints has been reduced from around 680 to 605. However, greater recourse is now made to so-called “flying” checkpoints, that is, temporary military road checkpoints established at random. In May 2005, 368 “flying” checkpoints were recorded and in June 2005 there were 374 “flying” checkpoints. The implementation of the checkpoint regime violates human dignity. The extent to which this occurs is clear from a recent report by MachsomWatch, entitled *A Counterview: Checkpoints 2004*. MachsomWatch is an organization of some 500 Israeli women drawn from different backgrounds who, in the pursuit of peace in the region, voluntarily monitor the behaviour of the IDF at checkpoints. The cited report states: “The checkpoint regime is arbitrary and random, and the regulations governing them change constantly, often dependent on the whim of a soldier on duty at the checkpoint... At the checkpoints ... we witness the methodical embittering of the Palestinians’ lives. ... Anyone who has seen the anxious smile on a man’s face as he extends his ID to be checked by an indifferent woman-soldier in the checking-position, cannot forget or disregard the injustice. We document the little humiliations and the tensions, day after day, the ignoring of the Palestinian Other’s humanity, as well as the expression of the overflowing rage of an occupied people” (pp. 8-10).
42. Although curfews are less frequently imposed than in previous years, this method of restricting freedom of movement is still resorted to. In May 2005, 23 curfews were imposed and in June there were 16.

C. Discrimination against women

43. Occupation and the wall unevenly violate women’s rights. Palestinian women are routinely harassed, intimidated and abused by Israeli soldiers at checkpoints and gates. They are humiliated in front of their families and subjected to sexual violence by both soldiers and settlers. There are approximately 120 Palestinian women prisoners of whom 11 are in administrative detention - that is, held without charge or trial. Women prisoners are subjected to gender-based violence while subject to investigation and in detention. Moreover, prison conditions raise concerns for their health and well-being. Restriction of movement owing to the occupation severely impedes Palestinian women’s access to education and health. Restrictions on movement limit opportunities for independence and decrease the number of women seeking formal education or employment as the culture of the region requires women to study and work from home. Women’s health has suffered as a result of their inability to reach health centres. Pregnant women are vulnerable to long waits at checkpoints. A number of unsafe deliveries in which both mothers and infants have died have occurred at checkpoints. From the beginning of the second Intifada to March 2004, 55 Palestinian women have given birth at checkpoints and 33 newborns were stillborn at checkpoints, owing to delays or denial of permission to reach medical facilities. Unemployment and poverty resulting from the occupation have been shown to produce divorce and domestic violence. The Israeli Nationality and Entry into Israel Law of 2003 aims to stop family unification when one spouse is a resident of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The result of this law is that thousands of affected family members live separately from each other with no legal means available to unify the family. The only way to maintain the unity of the family is to reside illegally in Israel, in permanent fear of investigation and expulsion. This places an immense burden on the psychological state of Palestinian women. The law, which does not apply to Israeli settlers living in the Occupied Palestin-

ian Territory or to Israeli Jews marrying aliens, institutes a discriminatory system based on national origin and is directed exclusively against Palestinians.

D. Humanitarian crisis

44. The Occupied Palestinian Territory has a population of 3.8 million (2.4 million in the West Bank and 1.4 million in the Gaza Strip). Approximately 42 per cent of the population (1.6 million) are registered refugees. There is a natural increase of 3.5 per cent.
45. Previous reports have drawn attention to the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory resulting from the occupation and the construction of the wall. Unemployment reached 25 per cent (34 per cent in Gaza and 23 per cent in the West Bank) in the last quarter of 2004. This is equivalent to 93,000 unemployed in Gaza and 133,000 in the West Bank. Loss of access to jobs in Israel is a major cause of unemployment. Approximately half of the population, or 1.8 million people, live below the official poverty line of US\$ 2.10 per day. Subsistence poverty, that is the inability to afford basic survival, is estimated at 16 per cent. Poverty is higher in Gaza (65 per cent) than in the West Bank (38 per cent). Poverty is the result of growing unemployment, closures, the loss of property caused by IDF house demolitions, land requisitions and the levelling of land. Agricultural incomes have dropped considerably as a result of the destruction of agricultural areas and the isolation of land and wells behind the wall.
46. Closure has limited the ability to access health and education services. The provision of health services has dropped remarkably as a result of restrictions in access. The quality of education has deteriorated because schools have been obliged to shorten teaching hours as a result of wall gate-opening times. Furthermore, children are forced to drop out of school either to help supplement diminishing family incomes or because their parents can no longer afford to send them to school.
47. Palestinians have faced severe difficulties in accessing safe water. Repeated IDF incursions have resulted in the destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure. Moreover, restrictions on movement have prevented Palestinians from reaching water supplies.
48. Although the IDF has discontinued punitive house demolitions and the past six months have not witnessed major house demolitions in the interests of so-called military necessity, there is a substantial shortfall of housing caused by IDF house demolitions in previous years. In Gaza many thousand persons still remain homeless. Houses are still demolished for failure to obtain a building permit. This form of house destruction, known as “administrative” demolitions, is still widely practised, particularly in Jerusalem. As it is virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain building permits, many houses are built without permits. The occupants of such houses run the risk of arbitrary demolition.

E. Right to a clean environment

49. Many features of the occupation are carried out with scant regard for the environment of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The wall has resulted in the disfigurement of the hills and towns of Palestine. The discharge of sewage from Jewish settlements onto Palestinian land is a serious problem. Many settlements in the West Bank have no form of treatment of industrial or domestic wastewater and the effluent flows into nearby Palestinian valleys without consideration of its environmental impact. Moreover, it is now proposed that solid waste from Israel is to be dumped in the Abu Shusha quarry in the district of Nablus. As noted above, lands in the At-Tuwani district have been deliberately poisoned by settlers.

VIII. THE DEATH PENALTY AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

50. The Special Rapporteur’s mandate does not extend to human rights violations committed by the Palestinian Authority. It would, however, be irresponsible for a human rights special rapporteur to allow the execution of Palestinian prisoners to go unnoticed. Since 2002, the Palestinian Authority has refrained from carrying out the death penalty. In 2005, however, five Palestinian prisoners have been executed. The level of civilization of a society can be measured by its attitude towards the death penalty. The Special Rapporteur expresses the hope that these executions were aberrations and that the Palestinian Authority will in future refrain from this form of punishment.

IX. THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

51. The withdrawal of settlers from Gaza is a momentous event. It will end the colonization of Gaza, free more land for Palestinians and result in the departure of the IDF from Gaza. It is a positive step and one to be welcomed. Gaza will, however, remain controlled, albeit not colonized. The human crisis in Gaza is likely to continue as the economy will further deteriorate because of Israeli control. Withdrawal from Gaza should not be allowed to divert attention from what is happening in the West Bank. The construction of the wall and the expansion of settlements seriously threaten the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and undermine prospects for Palestinian statehood. The annexation of Palestinian territory is probably already a fait accompli.
52. After finding that the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its associated regime are contrary to international law, the International Court of Justice held that States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and not to render aid or assistance. This requires that States refuse to recognize or support the permit system for accessing the “closed zone” or accepting goods produced in settlements between the wall and the Green Line. This has particular implications for States members of the European Union that import agricultural goods from Israeli territory. They are obliged to carefully scrutinize the origin of such goods and to refuse to accept produce emanating from the “closed zone”.
53. The International Court held that Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. In pursuance of this finding the General Assembly in resolution ES-10/15 requested the Secretary-General to establish a register of damage caused to all natural or legal persons who have suffered as a result of the construction of the wall. On 11 January 2005 the Secretary-General wrote to the President of the General Assembly (A/ES-10/294) setting out the legal and institutional framework for such a register. This process has made little progress and appears to have been lost in the bureaucracy of the United Nations. This is unfortunate because the International Court of Justice clearly attached great importance to Israel’s obligation to pay compensation for the destruction of homes, orchards, olive groves and agricultural land caused by the construction of the wall.
54. The Security Council is clearly disinclined to place pressure on Israel to implement the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. On 21 July, the Security Council decided not to embark on a consideration of the construction of the wall and the advisory opinion, following a briefing on the situation given to the Council by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Alvaro de Soto (see S/PV.5230 and Resumption 1). European States seem to share this approach. This is evidenced by a report in Ha’aretz of 28 July 2005 which says of a meeting between Mr. Sharon and President Chirac: “Israeli-Palestinian relations hardly came up in the meeting, Israeli participants said. Based on a prior understanding, the French avoided controversial issues, such as construction in West Bank settlements, the location of the separation fence and the (day after) the disengagement.”
55. In resolution ES/10-15, the General Assembly invited Switzerland, in its capacity as the depositary of the Geneva Conventions, to conduct consultations and report to the Assembly on Israel’s non-compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and to consider the possibility of resuming the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Government of Switzerland produced the report cited in paragraph 1 in which it found that there was little support for the convening of a conference, although it found that the majority of States believe that the legal framework for confronting the situation in Palestine was provided by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Government proposed the establishment of two separate dialogue groups, one with Israel, the other with the Palestinian Authority, reporting to the Quartet (see A/ES-10/304, annex, para. 59). This demonstrates the confidence placed in the Quartet. The most recent statement of the Quartet, of 23 June 2005, however, raises the question whether this confidence is well placed. While this statement expresses the concern of the Quartet “over settlement activity”, it fails to mention the construction of the wall, the expansion of settlements (as opposed to activity), the disfigurement of Jerusalem, the violation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and self-determination of the Palestinian people (although Palestinian statehood is contemplated). This suggests that the Quartet and the road map process to which it is committed are not premised on the rule of law or respect for human rights. If this is so, the road map runs the risk of repeating the failures of the Oslo process which likewise took no account of human rights considerations. The

mandate of the Special Rapporteur is to report on violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This mandate must surely extend to the attitude of States and international organizations to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This compels the Special Rapporteur to question the approach of the Quartet.

56. The United Nations finds itself in a particularly difficult position. On the one hand it is a party to the Quartet; on the other hand it is obliged to comply with the advisory opinion of its own judicial organ. Although this opinion may be advisory to States, it accurately reflects the law governing the construction of the wall and may be described as the law of the United Nations. In addition, the International Court held that "the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, should consider what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and the associated regime, taking due account of the present advisory opinion" (A/ES-10/273, advisory opinion, para. 160). This makes it clear that the United Nations is under a legal obligation to take action to bring to an end the construction of the wall. This was confirmed by the General Assembly in resolution ES/10-15 of 20 July 2004.
57. *The Government of Israel is determined to defer final status negotiations for as long as possible to enable it to establish as many facts on the ground as possible before such negotiations begin. The international community should be aware of this obvious fact and do its best to ensure that such negotiations commence forthwith. Only a resolution to the conflict which ends Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the construction of the wall, the expansion of settlements and the de-Palestinization of Jerusalem will lead to an environment in which there is hope for respect for human rights.*



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, DECREE ON THE
LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, GAZA, 20 AUGUST 2005**

Presidential Decree # of 2005 on the call for Legislative elections
President of the PLO Executive Committee
President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having reviewed: The amended basic law of 2003 and its amendments Elections Law No. 9 of 2005 and, Presidential decree No. 11 of 2005 concerning the postponement of the general legislative elections and, Based upon the powers bestowed in us and the public interest We hereby decree the following:

Article 1: The legislative elections shall be held in Jerusalem and all Palestinian governorates on Wednesday, 25/01/2006.

Article 2: Candidature for the PLC membership shall commence on Thursday, 24/11/2005 and shall end in the period specified by the law.

Article 3: Presidential decree No. 11 of 2005 and any other provisions that goes against this decree are hereby cancelled.

Article 4: All competent authorities, each within its own jurisdiction, must implement this Decree. The Decree shall enter into force upon its issuance and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued in the city of Gaza on 20/08/2005 A.D.

Mahmoud Abbas
President of the PLO Executive Committee
President of the Palestinian National Authority.



**UN SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT KENZO OSHIMA, STATEMENT
ON ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT, NEW YORK, 24 AUGUST 2005**

The members of the Security Council welcome the beginning of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank and they commend the ongoing implementation of this process.

The members of the Security Council appreciate the coordination between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority before and during the disengagement. They commend the assistance of James Wolfensohn, the Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, in ensuring the smooth and successful implementation of the process and an orderly assumption of responsibilities by the Palestinian Authority. They call for further cooperation between both sides in the forthcoming period.

The members of the Security Council underline the importance of full and complete disengagement in a manner consistent with the Road Map.

The members of the Security Council believe that successful disengagement can be the first step toward a resumption of the peace process. They reiterate their call upon both parties, in close cooperation with the Quartet, to ensure continued progress in the full implementation of the Road Map and relevant Security Council resolutions towards the creation of an independent, viable, democratic and sovereign State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security.



**JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER NOBUTAKA MACHIMURA,
STATEMENT ON THE COMPLETION OF EVACUATION OF ISRAELI SETTLERS
FROM GAZA AND PARTS OF THE NORTHERN WEST BANK, 24 AUGUST 2005**

1. Japan welcomes the successful completion of the evacuation of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank ("the Gaza Strip, etc.") on August 23 and commends the courage and determination of the Government of Israel.
2. Japan expects that both the Israeli and Palestinian sides will continue to exercise patience and restraint and keep making efforts to coordinate and cooperate closely towards resumption of the "Road Map".
3. Japan hopes that the Palestinian Authority (PA) will strive to restore order in the Gaza Strip, etc. and demonstrate leadership in the reconstruction and stabilization of these areas. Japan will continue to strive for advancing the Middle East peace process proactively and to support the peace efforts of the parties concerned, including steady implementation of \$100 million of assistance to the Palestinians.



**EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY, STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN
UNION ON THE ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT, BRUSSELS, 25 AUGUST 2005**

The European Union welcomes the historic progress made on Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank. It commends the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority for their commitment to overcome the difficult challenges they face. The European Union pays tribute to the courage of Prime Minister Sharon, and the Israeli Government, for implementing the disengagement plan, and to the Israeli security forces for their conduct. It also recognises the commitment of the Palestinian Authority in assisting a peaceful withdrawal. It applauds the close coordination between both sides and encourages them to continue on this path. It welcomes, and urges the continuation of, the restraint shown by the majority of Israelis and Palestinians.

The European Union believes that disengagement should be a significant step towards implementing the Quartet Roadmap. It encourages both parties to continue their cooperation on the remaining steps

to complete disengagement, including their close work with Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement, James Wolfensohn, on the key areas that he has identified.

The European Union reiterates its undertaking to assist both sides in advancing the peace process and achieving the goal of coexistence of the two States through the creation of a viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, in the framework of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia², the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.



EUROPEAN FACT-FINDING DELEGATION, STATEMENT FOLLOWING A VISIT TO ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, JERUSALEM, 28 AUGUST 2005

[The delegation's visit to Palestine/Israel lasted from 22-28 Aug. 2005]

Between 22 and 28 August, a European Delegation of former ministers from The Netherlands, Ireland and Germany and a high-ranking former ambassador from France paid a fact finding visit to Israel and Palestine (i.e. Occupied Palestinian Territories). The Delegation also consisted of five civil society representatives from Europe. The Delegation was led by Prof. Andreas van Agt, Prime Minister of The Netherlands from 1977 to 1982.

The visit took place shortly after Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The Delegation embarked on its trip at this crucial moment in time, to witness and assess at first-hand those facts that (continue to) threaten the prospects for a just peace and that are not being decisively addressed by the international community.

The Delegation came to Israel and Palestine to gather these facts. They wish to bring such facts to the attention of the international media and the political representatives and officials in the countries from which they come.

The facts as observed by the Delegation:

In the Jerusalem area, the Delegation witnessed the expansion of settlements, taking place at the present time. It visited a settlement east of Jerusalem, called Ma'ale Adumim. This settlement, home to 30.000 settlers and 14 kilometres deep in occupied territory, is part of a ring of settlements, which effectively cuts off occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank.

It also witnessed the Wall in and around East Jerusalem, e.g. Abu Dis, as well as the Bethlehem area. In these and other parts of the West Bank, the Wall obstructs the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, cutting through Palestinian neighbourhoods, isolating Palestinians from basic services and each other and constituting de facto annexation of vast swathes of occupied land.

Unless all settlements, the more than 400.000 settlers and the Wall in the West Bank are removed, the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian state will not be possible.

² * Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

In Hebron, the Delegation witnessed the effective imprisonment of 150.000 Palestinians within their own community and their total subordination to the interests of a few hundred Israeli settlers, residing illegally within their midst.

For a short period, the Delegation experienced the humiliation that the citizens of the Old City of Hebron can expect to undergo every day. On a street, protected overhead by netting, several objects, including refuse, were lodged. In a spot without netting, a glass bottle was thrown at Palestinians and Delegation members in such a way as could have caused serious injury.

The delegation also witnessed, in several respects, the more general features of the hardship that Israeli suffocation of the local economy brings to their lives. For example, about 2.500 Palestinian businesses have been shut down due to orders by the Israeli army.

Just a few days after the removal of the settlers, the Delegation visited the Gaza Strip. When entering the strip at Erez crossing point, the Delegation experienced the oppressive procedures, dehumanising infrastructure and humiliation, which Palestinians encounter on the occasion of every entry and exit.

The Delegation concluded that the occupation of the Gaza Strip is far from over, considering Israel's continuing control over vital aspects of the lives of the Gazans. All external borders, including air and sea, remain controlled by Israel, so that they continue to be isolated. The Israeli army is to remain inside parts of the Gaza Strip for an undisclosed period.

The Delegation witnessed some of the widespread destruction that 38 years of occupation have brought to the lives and properties of over one million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. About two thirds of the local population is unemployed and lives below the poverty line. These conditions pose a real and continuous threat to their human dignity.

Facilitated by UNWRA, the Delegation visited the Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, where 106.000 people live on 1,3 square kilometre. There, the misery is beyond description, among other things because of a shortage of water and access to education and health care. It concluded that the well-being of these and other refugees in the Gaza Strip, numbering 900.000 in total, is at great risk following Israel's disengagement.

In numerous parts inside the West Bank, the Delegation encountered physical obstacles, such as checkpoints and roadblocks, put in place by the Israeli army, which seriously infringe on the Palestinians' freedom of movement and hurt their livelihood and economy badly.

The Delegation also spoke to a number of key actors on both sides. Meetings were held with Israeli and Palestinian civil society representatives and parliamentarians. High level meetings were requested on both the Israeli, as well as the Palestinian side. The latter responded positively, granting a meeting with Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei.

All of these meetings reinforced the grave concerns of the Delegation members, that the existing threats to the prospects for peace must not be underestimated.

Conclusion:

Israel's disengagement from Gaza has raised hopes among many that peace is now within reach. In light of the above-mentioned and other facts it has witnessed on the ground, the Delegation regrets having to report that this hope is unjustified. The removal of settlers from Gaza does not constitute a withdrawal in any meaningful sense.

The Delegation recognises the need for democratisation and the strengthening of the rule of law on the Palestinian side and respect for human rights by the Palestinian Authority. It recognises and reaffirms Israel's right to exist and its right to security. It condemns any attacks directed against civilians.

The Delegation unequivocally condemns suicide bombings, executed by Palestinian non-state actors. This view was shared by all of those with whom the Delegation had meetings.

It firmly opposes the persistence of the Government of Israel in policies, in particular the settlement policy, which are illegal and cause much suffering among Palestinians on a daily basis. The Delegation views the continuing occupation and these policies as the root cause of the current deadlock and lack of progress in reaching a negotiated, just and durable peace in accordance with applicable international humanitarian and human rights law.

To date, the international community has not brought an end to these policies of the Government of Israel, thus sustaining a situation of lawlessness and impunity in Palestine. This fact has led to the Delegation's concentration on a call for action where it feels the greatest need for change exists.

The Delegation comes to the conclusion that in light of Israel's persistence in the above-mentioned policies, and the impact of such policies on the situation on the ground, an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict depends in the first instance on a more determined international intervention to achieve accountability from Israel and to enforce a compliance with International Law.

Intervention should be shaped in accordance with the relevant rules and principles of International Law as, *inter alia*, stated in the July 2004 ruling of the International Court of Justice on the Wall. To promote justice and peace, such intervention, by the European Union among others, must continue until Israel fully complies with International Law.

Our call:

Preamble

The Delegation concludes that the "constructive dialogue" between the EU and Israel has not led to tangible results with respect to forcing an end to policies of successive Israeli governments, policies that have caused, and are causing much suffering, and that obstruct peace;

It regrets that their own and other European governments, as well as EU institutions, have chosen not to apply such effective pressure on Israel as would lead to a compliance with International Law;

It deplores the fact that the recently concluded Action Plan between the EU and Israel does not include non-negotiable, operational and effective benchmarks referring to human rights standards, with which Israel has to comply before enjoying (extended) benefits;

It particularly deplores the fact that Israel's illegal Wall, and the human rights violations it causes, are not mentioned in the Action Plan and that a special working group on human rights has not been established;

The Delegation notes the call by 106 Palestinian organisations representing Palestinian refugees, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Palestinian citizens of Israel, to use boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel, until it complies with International Law;

It welcomes actions by civil actors, like the divestment initiative of the Presbyterian Church (US) and other churches, aimed at ensuring that they do not contribute in any way to supporting the occupation of Palestinian land.

Hence, the Delegation issues the following call.

The Delegation calls on the European Union and EU Member State officials and institutions dealing with Israel and Palestine, in particular their own governments, to:

- continue confirming the applicability of, and the demand for the enforcement of relevant rules and principles of International Law as a guiding features of any efforts towards peace in Israel and Palestine, in particular within the Quartet;
- call for an international peace conference, in support of the Roadmap for Peace, to be convened at short notice, in accordance with prevailing International Law;
- remind Israel, following the removal of its settlers, of its continuing responsibilities as the Occupying Power of the Gaza Strip (in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention); and exert pres-

- sure on Israel to allow freedom of movement for Palestinian goods and people within and in and out of the Gaza Strip, including from air and sea and a freely accessible transit corridor with the West Bank;
- live up to their obligations as stated in the ruling by the International Court of Justice on the Wall and force Israel to immediately stop building the Wall in occupied territory and dismantle the parts already built there; and to urge the Security Council of the United Nations to take immediate action, based on UNGAR ES-10/15 and aimed at enforcing this ruling;
 - suspend all forms of military co-operation with Israel which may contribute to or facilitate the suppression of the Palestinians; and to apply without delay the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Trade to the transit of military equipment to Israel via (air)ports of EU Member States, as well as to the export of such equipment to Israel;
 - force Israel to end its settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to exclude settlement-based enterprises from engaging in trade with EU member states;
 - actively support the rule of law and democratisation on the Palestinian side and promote the Palestinian Authority's respect for human rights;
 - contribute to the establishment of a special working group and monitoring mechanism addressing Israel's Human Rights behaviour;
 - contribute to the development, outlining, and putting into operation, of concrete benchmarks, which Israel has to meet before enjoying benefits, and to refrain from extending privileges to Israel until it lives up to these benchmarks and its international legal obligations;
 - indicate the clear intention to activate the human rights clause of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and suspend this agreement, if Israel does not live up to these benchmarks and its obligations in due time;

The Delegation calls on the EU and its Member States to take such and related action, without delay, in the interest of justice and peace in Israel and Palestine.

Signatories:

Former Ministers and Ambassadors

Prof. Andreas van Agt, Head of Delegation, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, 1977-1982

Mr. Michael D. Higgins, Minister of Culture, 1993-1997, and a current member of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Ireland

Dr. Norbert Blüm, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, 1982-1998, Germany

Mr. Lucien Champenois, Minister Plenipotentiary, France (retired), representative of the wider civil society

Dr. Rupert Neudeck, President of Greenhelmets, Germany

Dr. Hajo G. Meyer, Board member of "A Different Jewish Voice" and board member of "International Forum for Justice and Peace", The Netherlands

Ms. Chris Tilanus, The Netherlands

Mr. Ben Smoes, Chairman "International Forum for Justice and Peace", The Netherlands

Mr. Jan van der Kolk, Former member of the Board of Trustees "Interchurch organisation for development co-operation", The Netherlands



**STATEMENT BY THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE
OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE,
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 30 AUGUST 2005**

Together with the rest of the international community, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been watching closely the removal of Israeli settlements from the occupied Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank. The Bureau of the Committee views this development as a promising step that could revive negotiations within the framework of the Road Map and move forward the stalled peace process. The Bureau of the Committee welcomes the swift and determined implementation of the removal of settlers by the Israeli side. The Palestinian Authority, for its part, has fully demonstrated its ability to control the security situation throughout this critical period.

Although the decision of the Israeli Government to remove settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank was a unilateral one, it resulted in a resumption of direct security coordination between the parties. This created a favourable opportunity, which has to be built upon and widened by the two sides in order to lay the groundwork for future cooperation in security and other areas.

The Bureau of the Committee emphasizes that the Gaza pull-out should be complete and irreversible, allowing the Palestinian Authority to exercise control over its borders, crossing points, sea and airspace. Also indispensable are guarantees for an unhindered flow of people and goods into and out of Gaza. The construction and operation of a seaport and an airport, as well as a permanent geographical link to the West Bank are absolutely vital for the Palestinian economy.

The international community has voiced its readiness to support all efforts of the Palestinian Authority aimed at revitalizing the economy of the Gaza Strip. The Bureau of the Committee commends the donor community for the first important steps taken in support of the economic rehabilitation and development of the Gaza Strip after the Israeli withdrawal. We also urge the donor community to live up to its commitments and provide the necessary assistance in an expeditious and efficient manner.

The Bureau of the Committee expresses the hope that the positive momentum gained as a result of the removal of settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank will be followed by similar steps in the rest of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and breathe new life into the political process, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.



**GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL, COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 96TH FOREIGN
MINISTERS MEETING, JEDDAH, 6 SEPTEMBER 2005 [EXCERPTS]**

[...] The Council also reviewed the latest events in the Palestinian territories and developments in the Middle East peace process. It looked forward to the evacuation of the Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip as a step to be followed by other steps for the complete withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian lands to enable the Palestinian people to establish an independent state with Al-Quds [East Jerusalem] as its capital. The Council reiterated, in this regard, the adherence of the GCC states to the peace initiative presented by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz at the Arab Summit held in Beirut in 2002 and adopted by the Summit to become an Arab initiative for peace in the region on the basis of the United Nations Resolutions. This initiative, it declared, should be considered as a genuine framework for achieving a just and comprehensive peace for the cause of the Palestinians. Warning against threats raised by an extremist Jewish group to raid and attack Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Council affirmed that such threats are aimed at insulting the feelings of Muslims and violating the sanctity of the Holy Sites. It confirmed that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East will not be realized unless an independent Palestinian state is established with Al-Quds [East Jerusalem] as its capital and Israel withdraws from the occupied Arab Syrian Golan Heights to the borders of the 4th June, 1967 as well as from the remaining Arab lands in southern Lebanon.

The Council renewed its call on the international community to make the Middle East region free from all weapons of mass destruction, including the Gulf region, and to put pressure on Israel to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and submit all its nuclear installations to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), considering this as a basic condition for any future security arrangements.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, ADDRESS MARKING ISRAEL'S
EVACUATION OF THE GAZA STRIP, GAZA CITY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2005**

[See also *Map 1, 2 and 3 in the Annex.*]

Dear Citizens, Our Great Palestinian people, Our Arab Nation,

Today, after 38 years of suffering, steadfastness and sacrifice a new dawn has risen in a precious part of our homeland. The dawn of freedom rises with the evacuation of the last Israeli soldier and settler. The direct military control and colonization of Gaza Strip comes to end, once and for all.

Gaza is awakening with new hope and promise yet looking to make its prosperous and democratic future with the same determination, will, confidence and belief that made it achieve its victory and freedom by ending the direct occupation and dismantling the colonization project in Gaza and Jenin. Our people will continue with this march until the occupation ends in all its forms and Israel's colonization disappears from all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, first and foremost East Jerusalem.

These are glorious historical moments of mixed emotions. Only those who fell under occupation, resisted it, made sacrifices and won can realize their deep meaning and dimensions. Those who took their freedom and restored their will and dignity to remain free deserve a dignified living.

Today we express our joy and celebrate our long-awaited freedom and happiness.

On this happy national day I express my heart-felt congratulations to all those who love freedom and believe in its values, to all the Arab and Muslim nation, to all peace-loving nations of the world, including the forces of peace in Israel, to all our people at home and in exile, women, men and children, young and old. I recall a long list of martyrs and bow in respect to their generous sacrifices, primarily the symbolic leader Yasser Arafat who planted the seed of freedom and independence. May Allah bestow mercy on them all. I also recall the long list of those injured and express appreciation to every drop of their blood that irrigated the soil of this land and pray for their recovery. I recall our beloved prisoners who lie in the prisons of occupation. I emphasize that their liberation and freedom is an indispensable part of our freedom. I will continue to put the issue of their release at the top of my priorities.

My congratulations, appreciation and respect goes also to all factions and political groups who continuously worked hard through the Follow Up Committee and contributed to this great achievement in the framework of commitment to national principles and the national consensus embodied in the Cairo declaration, especially in regard to *tahdiya* (the period of calm) and resolving disputed issues through dialogue. This emphasized the civilized image of our people as a reflection of our values and steadfastness. It also allowed for a quiet and smooth evacuation of the Israeli occupation army and settlers, disappointing those who wish ill to our people.

My salute goes to all members of the National Security Forces, police and the security apparatuses. In spite of their scarce capabilities and the destruction inflicted on their institutions by Israel, they proved, with their strong will and true affiliation and nationalism, great capability in shouldering responsibilities and performing their duties.

May I also send my thanks and appreciation to all brothers and friends – especially our brothers in Egypt – who have strongly supported our people in these conditions and created with us this historical event. I express thanks and appreciation to the donor countries for their generous financial support for the purpose of reconstructing Gaza after 38 years of de-development. We hope this will help our people in the process of development and construction.

Our joy will not be complete without having all the elements of national sovereignty. The redeployment of the Israeli occupation army and settlers from Gaza Strip as a unilateral step does not mean, in any way, that the occupation has come to an end. Gaza's crossing points with the world, parts of its land, water and air and the link with the West Bank are still outstanding issues threatening to trans-

form Gaza into a big prison. Gaza is an indispensable part of our occupied land, along with the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This means, to us and to every Palestinian citizen, that the occupation effectively ends when we achieve the objectives of the peace process: the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on all the Palestinian land occupied in 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital; a just and agreed resolution of the refugee problem according to resolution 194; a historic reconciliation between two states for two peoples who live in peace, mutual respect and good neighborliness. This will put an end to this long and bloody conflict.

As we realize the intentions of the Israeli government, the objectives of its unilateral plan and its daily practices that fly in the face of international law - the continued construction of the separation and expansion Wall on our land, the intensive colonization particularly in Jerusalem and the attempts to isolate Jerusalem from the rest of West Bank, and the continued imprisonment of prisoners - we are determined to make the Israeli evacuation from Gaza Strip a step towards ending the occupation of all the Palestinian land occupied in 1967. We are strong with the justness of our cause, our national unity and the support of the international community and the international law.

Let us make our construction and administration of Gaza Strip a real model of our great and civilized ability to manage and create our future by ourselves, and a message to the world to end all forms of occupation.

Today we address the international community and all our friends and brothers. We stress that the success of Gaza Strip can be enhanced by heading to a comprehensive settlement, partnership and negotiations, on the basis of implementing the Road Map obligations, international law, the signed agreements and the Arab Initiative approved at Beirut summit in 2002 which calls for a complete end to Israel's military occupation.

Unilateral, partial and interim solutions do not provide genuine peace and do not build relations based on equality and mutual interests.

Therefore, we address the government and people of Israel and extend our hands to them to work together for real, just and equal peace: let this not be a wasted opportunity – let's move forward on the path to real peace.

I call on the Israeli government to benefit from this historical opportunity and implement its obligations by ceasing its settlement activity and the construction of the Wall. Stop creating facts on the ground, release our prisoners and allow our deportees to return.

We stand today with two important tasks that we are determined to accomplish: the task of independence and peace, and the task of construction and development.

On the internal level: the government has prepared a national plan, in cooperation with the donor countries, for the reconstruction and comprehensive development following Israel's mass destruction of all our aspects of life and all the infrastructure. Although our country lacks natural resources, it has a major and real resource: the Palestinian people. Today I am pleased to announce to you a package of development projects that aim to revive our national economy in all parts of our country, create thousands of job opportunities and fight poverty. They include:

1. *Roads and housing*: we will build the city of Sheikh Khalifah Bin Zayed on the ruins of Morag colony. It will have 3,000 housing units at a cost of \$100 million. This will be built in addition to the Emirates quarter in Rafah which will contain 638 housing units.
We will also build 1,210 housing units in Rafah with financing from Saudi Arabia to compensate those whose houses were demolished by the Israeli army. There are also projects to renovate houses partially destroyed by the Israeli army.
We will reconstruct Salah al-Din in Gaza at a cost of \$20 million, in addition to other roads.
We will begin work to build the seaport to make it our gate to the world. We will develop only those crossing points built on 1967 borders.

2. *Water*: we announce sewage and drinking water in north Gaza, Khan Yunis, Hebron, Jenin and Tulkarem.
3. *Economic Development*: we have 54 km² of land that will be ready as a production base containing 3,300 dunums of greenhouses in Gaza which will create 4,000 new jobs and develop Palestinian trade by encouraging those sectors that generate exports and create jobs in order to ease unemployment and fight poverty.
4. *Education*: we will build some 50 new schools annually, in addition to new classrooms to meet annual needs, taking into consideration that we have 50,000 new pupils every year.
5. *Environment*: we will cooperate with the UN to remove the rubble left by the Israeli occupation following the demolition of the colonies.
6. *Health*: we will build a new hospital in Qalqilya to serve the city besieged by the Wall, in addition to other health centers and clinics.
7. *Judiciary*: we are concentrating our efforts to build new courts and maintain and develop existing courts in order to impose ensure adherence to law and order.
8. *Jerusalem*: We will enhance the steadfastness of our people in Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley through projects that have economic returns.

In addition, the path is now open for private sector investment. We encourage investors to establish productive and services projects in all parts of our country.

At the political level: we express again our readiness and preparedness to immediately resume final status negotiations. We call on the Quartet, primarily the United States, to activate its role and participation and to continue its efforts, through the implementation of the Road Map, in order to achieve President Bush's vision of establishing a free and independent Palestinian state. We also call upon our Arab brothers to redouble their efforts to revive the Arab peace initiative. In this regard, we express our people's appreciation of the genuine brotherly positions and the generous support for our just struggle. We trust that this great financial support will continue and expand to embody the strategic depth and the common destiny of our people and its Arab nation.

Dear citizens, Brothers and Sisters:

Since I had the honor to be your President, with your trust and support, I always followed a path of frankness. I have complete trust in the ability of our people and its loyalty to our homeland. This is what I rely on after relying on God. Therefore, let me be frank with you and explain to you on this glorious day we face a historic opportunity. We hope to put a strong and eternal foundation stone for our national project and independent state.

Benefiting from this opportunity will depend upon our performance and efficiency. We must not allow anyone to waste this opportunity. It was made by the sacrifices of our people and no one has the right to confiscate or waste it under any excuse. It is the future of all our children. We have no homeland but this homeland. We have no life but in this homeland or be buried in its pure soil. We are all concerned and obligated to protect and maintain its security and stability by imposing law and order. Each one of us has interest in its reconstruction, development and prosperity. It is the right and duty of every one of us. When each one of us performs his duty, all the others will enjoy their rights.

There is no place today for personal or factional agendas. The only agenda is the national agenda which embodies the identity of our people, maintains its gains and achievements and creates its future. The way to this agenda is through dialogue, participation and democracy through equal opportunity, rights and duties. I will work day and night to protect and implement the constitution and ensure the implementation of this national agenda through the power of law and the power of your mandate, trust and support.

Despite difficult and harsh security and economic conditions, our great and steadfast people have maintained our traditions, noble values, unity, originality and our adherence to our rights and identity. We deserve a free, dignified, secure and stable life. Therefore, we will do everything possible to end all the negative forms that violate law and order and threaten the security of our society, and perhaps our national project. In addition, these negative forms are alien and foreign to the values and tradi-

tions of our society. The principle that govern us is that of “one authority, one law imposed on all, one legal weapon and political plurality.”

We will not allow the state of lawlessness, the disorder of weapons, taking law into one’s hands, kidnapping and attacks on government institutions and state land to continue. On this occasion, I reaffirm that public land evacuated by Israel will be used only for public benefit according to law. Private land, amounting to less than 3%, will be returned to its owners or they will be compensated according to law. No one is above the law.

These duties are not only my responsibilities or that of the Palestinian Authority alone: they are the responsibilities of us all. Let us rise to the challenge and meet our responsibilities. If we carry them out in the right way, Gaza will become the cornerstone for completing our national project and our dream to build our independent state on all of our national soil with East Jerusalem as its capital.

I strongly believe that we can, God willing, make Gaza an oasis of stability and prosperity and the foundation for achieving our dream through belief, work, national unity and the political participation open to all.

Brothers and sisters:

Our people face real challenges, with many parties working against us. These parties spread rumors to destroy the spirit of our people. Let us respond by word and deed, united and determined.

Congratulations to our great people. Today Gaza, and tomorrow, God willing and through the hard work and steadfastness of our people, West Bank and Jerusalem.

May the Blessings and Peace of God be Upon Us All.



**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER ARIEL SHARON, ADDRESS BEFORE
THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2005**

[PM Sharon was "rewarded" for carrying out the disengagement plan by being given the opportunity to address the UNGA. In his speech, he mentioned the rights of the Palestinians to a state, and reiterated the Israeli claim of sovereignty over Jerusalem as well as the need to build the security fence.]

My friends and colleagues, heads and representatives of the UN member states,

I arrived here from Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish people for over 3,000 years, and the undivided and eternal capital of the State of Israel.

At the outset, I would like to express the profound feelings of empathy of the people of Israel for the American nation, and our sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones. I wish to encourage my friend, President George Bush, and the American people, in their determined efforts to assist the victims of the hurricane and rebuild the ruins after the destruction. The State of Israel, which the United States stood beside at times of trial, is ready to extend any assistance at its disposal in this immense humanitarian mission.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand before you at the gate of nations as a Jew and as a citizen of the democratic, free and sovereign State of Israel, a proud representative of an ancient people, whose numbers are few, but whose contribution to civilization and to the values of ethics, justice and faith, surrounds the world and encompasses history. The Jewish people have a long memory, the memory which united the exiles of Israel for thousands of years: a memory which has its origin in G-d's commandment to our forefather Abraham: "Go forth!" and continued with the receiving of the Torah at the foot of Mount Sinai and

the wanderings of the children of Israel in the desert, led by Moses on their journey to the promised land, the land of Israel.

I was born in the Land of Israel, the son of pioneers - people who tilled the land and sought no fights - who did not come to Israel to dispossess its residents. If the circumstances had not demanded it, I would not have become a soldier, but rather a farmer and agriculturist. My first love was, and remains, manual labor; sowing and harvesting, the pastures, the flock and the cattle.

I, as someone whose path of life led him to be a fighter and commander in all Israel's wars, reaches out today to our Palestinian neighbors in a call for reconciliation and compromise to end the bloody conflict, and embark on the path which leads to peace and understanding between our peoples. I view this as my calling and my primary mission for the coming years.

The land of Israel is precious to me, precious to us, the Jewish people, more than anything. Relinquishing any part of our forefathers' legacy is heartbreaking, as difficult as the parting of the Red Sea. Every inch of land, every hill and valley, every stream and rock, is saturated with Jewish history, replete with memories. The continuity of Jewish presence in the Land of Israel never ceased. Even those of us who were exiled from our land, against their will, to the ends of the earth - their souls, for all generations, remained connected to their homeland, by thousands of hidden threads of yearning and love, expressed three times a day in prayer and songs of longing.

The Land of Israel is the open Bible, the written testimony, the identity and right of the Jewish people. Under its skies, the prophets of Israel expressed their claims for social justice, and their eternal vision for alliances between peoples, in a world which would know no more war. Its cities, villages, vistas, ridges, deserts and plains preserve as loyal witnesses its ancient Hebrew names. Page after page, our unique land is unfurled, and at its heart is united Jerusalem, the city of the Temple upon Mount Moriah, the axis of the life of the Jewish people throughout all generations, and the seat of its yearnings and prayers for 3,000 years. The city to which we pledged an eternal vow of faithfulness, which forever beats in every Jewish heart: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning!"

I say these things to you because they are the essence of my Jewish consciousness, and of my belief in the eternal and unimpeachable right of the people of Israel to the Land of Israel. However, I say this here also to emphasize the immensity of the pain I feel deep in my heart at the recognition that we have to make concessions for the sake of peace between us and our Palestinian neighbors.

The right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel does not mean disregarding the rights of others in the land. The Palestinians will always be our neighbors. We respect them, and have no aspirations to rule over them. They are also entitled to freedom and to a national, sovereign existence in a state of their own.

This week, the last Israeli soldier left the Gaza Strip, and military law there was ended. The State of Israel proved that it is ready to make painful concessions in order to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. The decision to disengage was very difficult for me, and involves a heavy personal price. However, it is the absolute recognition that it is the right path for the future of Israel that guided me. Israeli society is undergoing a difficult crisis as a result of the Disengagement, and now needs to heal the rifts.

Now it is the Palestinians' turn to prove their desire for peace. The end of Israeli control over and responsibility for the Gaza Strip allows the Palestinians, if they so wish, to develop their economy and build a peace-seeking society, which is developed, free, law-abiding, transparent, and which adheres to democratic principles. The most important test the Palestinian leadership will face is in fulfilling their commitment to put an end to terror and its infrastructures, eliminate the anarchic regime of armed gangs, and cease the incitement and indoctrination of hatred towards Israel and the Jews.

Until they do so - Israel will know how to defend itself from the horrors of terrorism. This is why we built the security fence, and we will continue to build it until it is completed, as would any other country defending its citizens. The security fence prevents terrorists and murderers from arriving in city cen-

ters on a daily basis and targeting citizens on their way to work, children on their way to school and families sitting together in restaurants. This fence is vitally indispensable. This fence saves lives!

The successful implementation of the Disengagement Plan opens up a window of opportunity for advancing towards peace, in accordance with the sequence of the Roadmap. The State of Israel is committed to the Roadmap and to the implementation of the Sharm El-Sheikh understandings. And I hope that it will be possible, through them, to renew the political process.

I am among those who believe that it is possible to reach a fair compromise and coexistence in good neighborly relations between Jews and Arabs. However, I must emphasize one fact: there will be no compromise on the right of the State of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, with defensible borders, in full security and without threats and terror.

I call on the Palestinian leadership to show determination and leadership, and to eliminate terror, violence and the culture of hatred from our relations. I am certain that it is in our power to present our peoples with a new and promising horizon, a horizon of hope.

Distinguished representatives,

As I mentioned, the Jewish people have a long memory. We remember events which took place thousands of years ago, and certainly remember events which took place in this hall during the last 60 years. The Jewish people remember the dramatic vote in the UN Assembly on November 29, 1947, when representatives of the nations recognized our right to national revival in our historic homeland. However, we also remember dozens of harsh and unjust decisions made by United Nations over the years. And we know that, even today, there are those who sit here as representatives of a country whose leadership calls to wipe Israel off the face of the earth, and no one speaks out.

The attempts of that country to arm itself with nuclear weapons must disturb the sleep of anyone who desires peace and stability in the Middle East and the entire world. The combination of murky fundamentalism and support of terrorist organizations creates a serious threat that every member nation in the UN must stand against.

I hope that the comprehensive reforms which the United Nations is undergoing in its 60th anniversary year will include a fundamental change and improvement in the approach of the United Nations, its organizations and institutions, towards the State of Israel.

My fellow colleagues and representatives,

Peace is a supreme value in the Jewish legacy, and is the desired goal of our policy. After the long journey of wanderings and the hardships of the Jewish people; after the Holocaust which obliterated one third of our people; after the long and arduous struggle for revival; after more than 57 consecutive years of war and terror which did not stop the development of the State of Israel; after all this - our heart's desire was and remains to achieve peace with our neighbors. Our desire for peace is strong enough to ensure that we will achieve it, only if our neighbors are genuine partners in this longed-for goal. If we succeed in working together, we can transform our plot of land, which is dear to both peoples, from a land of contention to a land of peace - for our children and grandchildren.

In a few days time on the Hebrew calendar, the New Year will begin, the 5,766th year since the Creation. According to Jewish belief, the fates of people and nations are determined at the New Year by the Creator - to be spared or to be doomed. May the Holy One, blessed be He, determine that this year, our fate and the fate of our neighbors is peace, mutual respect and good neighborly relations.

From this distinguished podium, on behalf of the people of Israel, I wish all the people of the world a happy New Year. Shana Tova!



**QUARTET STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE,
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 20 SEPTEMBER 2005**

Representatives of the Quartet - U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in New York to discuss the Gaza disengagement and the prospects for movement towards peace in the Middle East.

The Quartet recognizes and welcomes the successful conclusion of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank and the moment of opportunity that it brings to renew efforts on the Roadmap. The Quartet reiterates its belief that this brave and historic decision should open a new chapter on the path to peace in the region. It paid tribute to the political courage of Prime Minister Sharon and commends the Israeli government, its armed forces and its police for the smooth and professional execution of the operation. It also expresses its appreciation for the responsible behavior of the Palestinian Authority and people for helping maintain a peaceful environment during the evacuation. The Quartet applauds the close coordination between the Israeli and Palestinian security services during the process. These significant developments create new opportunities and call for renewed focus on the responsibilities of all parties. The conclusion of disengagement represents an important step toward achieving the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.

The Quartet commends continued cooperation between both parties and the U.S. Security Coordinator, General William Ward, on security issues related to the disengagement. The Quartet calls for an end to all violence and terror. While the PA leadership has condemned violence and has sought to encourage Palestinian groups who have engaged in terrorism to abandon this course and engage in the democratic process, the Quartet further urges the Palestinian Authority to maintain law and order and dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. The Quartet reaffirms the continued importance of comprehensive reform of the Palestinian security services. The rule of law through authorized security institutions is fundamental to democratic practice. The Quartet expresses appreciation to those parties which have made contributions to the security reform effort, particularly Egypt, the European Union, and the United States. Finally, the Quartet welcomes the agreement between the Governments of Israel and Egypt on security arrangements along the Gaza-Egypt border.

At today's meeting, Quartet Special Envoy Wolfensohn's report on his current efforts and initiatives was discussed. The Quartet encourages his further work to facilitate continued discussion between the parties to build on the success of disengagement. The Palestinian Authority should demonstrate its ability to govern, and all members of the international community should look for ways to support these efforts. The Quartet will continue to lead international efforts to support sustainable growth of the Palestinian economy and to strengthen the overall capacity of the Palestinian Authority to assume its responsibilities through an aggressive pursuit of state building and democratic reform efforts. Given the critical importance of free movement in the West Bank to the viability of the Palestinian economy, the Quartet urges an easing of the system of movement restrictions, consistent with Israel's security needs. The Quartet reaffirms that coordinated action by the international donor community is crucial for the success of the Quartet Special Envoy's Quick Impact Economic Program, as well as for the longer term three year plan for Palestinian development. In this regard, it notes the importance of the \$750 million in assistance which will be disbursed to the Palestinian Authority during the remainder of this year. The Quartet urges Arab states to implement existing commitments and to engage fully and positively in response to the Special Envoy's initiatives. To ensure the success of this effort, the Quartet views continued progress on institutional reform of the Palestinian Authority, as well as progress in combating corruption, as essential. The Quartet also welcomes the announcement of Palestinian Legislative Council elections and upcoming municipal elections.

Looking beyond disengagement, the Quartet reviewed progress on implementation of the Roadmap. The Quartet calls for renewed action in parallel by both parties on their obligations in accordance with the sequence of the Roadmap. As part of the confidence-building process the Quartet urged both sides

to return to the cooperative agenda reached at Sharm el-Sheikh. Contacts between the parties should be intensified at all levels. The Quartet charges the Envoys to keep progress under review.

Both parties are reminded of their obligations under the Roadmap to avoid unilateral actions which prejudice final status issues. The Quartet reaffirms that any final agreement must be reached through negotiation between the parties and that a new Palestinian state must be truly viable with contiguity in the West Bank and connectivity to Gaza. On settlements, the Quartet welcomed the fact that, in areas covered by disengagement, Israel has gone beyond its obligations under the first phase of the Roadmap. The Quartet expresses its concern that settlement expansion elsewhere must stop, and Israel must remove unauthorized outposts. The Quartet continues to note with concern the route of the Israeli separation barrier, particularly as it results in the confiscation of Palestinian land, cuts off the movement of people and goods, and undermines Palestinians' trust in the Roadmap process as it appears to prejudge the final borders of a Palestinian state.

The Quartet members exchanged views on the Russian proposal to hold an international meeting of experts in Moscow. Contacts on this matter will continue, taking into consideration the need to give attention to the various aspects of the Middle East situation, including multilateral matters.

The Quartet reiterates its commitment to the principles outlined in previous statements, including those of May 4, 2004, May 9, 2005, and June 23, 2005, and reaffirms its commitment to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based upon U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.



**EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER, REMARKS TO
THE JOINT MEETING OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE COMMITTEES
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS,
BRUSSELS, 5 OCTOBER 2005**

And I can announce that from here I will go straight to the Commission meeting where we will adopt a Communication setting out our plans for aiding the Palestinian Authority beyond Israel's disengagement. And helping it move towards a sustainable solution to the conflict where two states live side by side in peace and security.

You will formally receive the Communication by the usual channels. But let me take advantage of this occasion to give you advance notice of its contents.

This is our response to the new political environment in the region post-disengagement. After almost five years of violence, destruction and economic decline, at long last we have seen a concerted effort to advance the peace process. We must do everything we can to build on the current momentum, and encourage the parties to re-engage in the Road Map. Every opportunity for progress in this painful and intractable conflict must be leveraged for all it is worth.

That's why, for the first time, we are proposing a multi-annual framework for assistance to the Palestinian Authority. The Quartet's Special Envoy, James Wolfensohn, laid down a challenge to the international community to provide €3 billion a year over the next 3 years. This Communication is our response.

It identifies a number of criteria that need to be fulfilled to justify further EU involvement, including progress in the 6 priority areas identified by the Quartet Special Envoy; reengagement with the Road Map; and constructive engagement by Israel and the Palestinians. Additional resources will have limited impact unless the conditions set out by the Quartet Special Envoy are addressed. It is also important that Community and Member State resources are better coordinated, so I will continue to push for a Clearing House mechanism. I will come back to the Parliament and Council with more specific proposals for Community funding for the Palestinians.

Beyond the finances, the overarching aim of the Communication is supporting the political and economic viability of the future Palestinian State. We want to revive the Palestinian economy and build up institutions. We want the Palestinian people to see a real improve in their standard of living, to move around freely and to feel a new sense of confidence in their future. More specifically we will:

- Support elections, the judicial system and the rule of law;
- Promote a thriving civil society, especially in human rights;
- Focus on proper control of the security situation;
- Make public administration more effective and fight against corruption;
- Improve trade and investment opportunities; and
- Reconstruct infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza.

This builds on our current support for the economy and infrastructure in the context of disengagement. With our €60 million quick-start package we are restoring essential services such as water, transport and energy; supporting education and health; and expanding our customs programme.

The new Communication represents a qualitative step-change in our strategy towards the Palestinian Authority, and should help revitalise the Road Map and more the parties towards peace.

The situation remains fragile, but that cannot be an excuse for inaction. We must do all we can to push for a lasting settlement.



US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, REMARKS AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC, 20 OCTOBER 2005

Thank you all, thanks. It's my honor to welcome the democratically elected leader of the Palestinian Authority to the White House for the second time this year. We just had some good talks. Mr. President, thanks. A good, open, exchange of ideas.

President Abbas is a man devoted to peace and to his people's aspirations for a state of their own. And today the Palestinian people are closer to realizing those aspirations. It's a really interesting period of history, I think. I was just commenting to the President when we were in the Oval Office how much things have changed in the Holy Land. After all, he got elected in January; there were successful Palestinian municipal elections, and then we witnessed the completion of Israel's disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. It's been an eventful year.

And I say it's an eventful year because the ultimate objective is there - for there to be two states, living side-by-side in peace; two democracies living side-by-side in peace. And I believe that's where we're headed. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and parts of West Bank was a bold decision, with historic significance. President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority contributed to the success of the withdrawal in significant ways. Mr. President, thank you.

Through the active coordination and ground-level cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces, the disengagement has been completed successfully and calmly. Israeli withdrawal creates new opportunities, creates responsibilities for the Palestinian people.

The way forward must begin by confronting the threat that armed gangs pose to a genuinely democratic Palestine. And those armed gangs must confront the threat that armed gangs pose to lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Now, Mr. President, you ran on a platform of peace. That's why the people voted for you. I strongly support your rejection of terror and your commitment to what you have called one authority, one law, and one gun. The United States, in cooperation with the international community, has helped you

achieve this through the efforts of our senior U.S. security coordinator, General Kip Ward. I appreciate your service, General Ward. Thank you for being here, and thank you for all your hard work to help the Palestinian security forces at a critical time. Job well done.

In the coming days, I'll be naming our new coordinator to build on the progress General Ward has made. This person will take on an enhanced mission to help President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority carry out their responsibility to end terror attacks, dismantle terrorist infrastructure, maintain law and order, and, one day, provide security for their own state.

The way forward must include rebuilding the Palestinian economy. This goal has the support of the Quartet: the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia. Quartet Special Envoy Jim Wolfensohn is coordinating a broad effort to generate economic and financial support from the international community for the Palestinian Authority, and he's doing a good job. I'm going to continue to consult with our Quartet partners to ask Jim to extend his mission until next spring.

It's important that we make quick progress on the issues that Jim has identified as most critical for the Palestinian economy, including opening the Rafah crossing, connecting the West Bank in Gaza, improving the ability of Palestinians to travel in the West Bank, and beginning work on the Gaza seaport. These are all practical steps that will help the Palestinian economy grow and flourish. I believe that Arab states have a particular responsibility to help the Palestinians build a strong and prosperous economy, and I urge them to create an environment in the region that strengthens the possibility of peace.

The way forward must continue to include democratic elections. The upcoming elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council offer an opportunity to open the door to the next generation of Palestinian leaders. They'll be responsible for building a peaceful and hopeful future for their country.

In the short-term, the Palestinian Authority must earn the confidence of its peoples, by holding elections and having a functioning government that delivers economic opportunity. The Palestinian Authority must also earn the confidence of its neighbors by rejecting and fighting terrorism.

As I have stated in the past, achieving peace demands action from all parties. Israel must continue to work with Palestinian leaders to help improve the daily lives of Palestinians. At the same time, Israel should not undertake any activity that contravenes its road map obligations, or prejudices the final status negotiations with regard to Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. This means that Israel must remove unauthorized posts and stop settlement expansion. It also means that the barrier now being built to protect Israelis from terrorist attacks must be a security barrier, rather than a political barrier. Israeli leaders must take into account the impact this security barrier has on Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities.

This is a time of great possibility in the Middle East. And the people of the region are counting on their leaders to seize the opportunities for peace and progress. This work isn't going to be easy, but the path forward is clear. I want to thank President Abbas for his hard work. I appreciate your service, Mr. President. I assured him that the United States will use our influence to help realize a shared vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security. - Welcome.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, REMARKS AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH, WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC, 20 OCTOBER 2005**

Thank you. Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your warm welcome, and I would like to express my satisfaction with the talks that I conducted with you and your senior aides.

You have emphasized, Mr. President, from this place, about five months ago, the basic counters for the U.S. position regarding the various aspects of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This position, which you have reiterated today, contributes fundamentally to advance the chances of reviving and resuming the peace process in the region.

In the last few months, the dismantling of settlements and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip was concluded. The Palestinian Authority have worked very hard with all its energy, in order to make sure that this will happen without any incident, in order to have this as a window of an opportunity that will help us to move faster toward achieving additional steps on the way toward realizing just peace, based on your vision and on international resolutions.

This window, Mr. President, must remain open. And this opportunity must be strengthened through resolving all the outstanding issues - as you have mentioned, the Gaza crossing point and the establishment of a permanent link between Gaza and the West Bank. At the same time, we must immediately start implementing what the road map and the Sharm el-Sheikh agreements regarding the cessation of settlement activities and construction of the wall in the West Bank, particularly in Jerusalem, in addition to withdrawal of the Israeli forces to positions prior to September 28, 2000.

With the removal of the roadblocks, which, unfortunately, turned the lives of Palestinians into hardship, suffering, humiliation, and also a very important sensitive issue, which is the release of prisoners of freedom from Israeli jails. The implementation of these requirements, Mr. President, represents urging the talks on permanent status issues regarding Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, in order to reach, at the end, peace, which would allow for the establishment of an independent, democratic Palestinian state, on all the territories occupied in 1967. That state that would live in a good, neighborly relationship in peace with the state of Israel.

Mr. President, there is approximately 100 days between us and the elections for our legislative council, where the Palestinian people would go to the ballot box to elect for the first time since their - for the first time in 10 years their representatives. This, for us, represents a very important landmark. On one hand, it comes a whole year since I assumed office, and also these elections would represent a renewal process, rebuilding process of our political process.

Also, these elections would consolidate and reinforce the slogan I ran on during my presidential election, which emphasized clearly the one authority, the one law, the one legal, legitimate law and political pluralism. The new legislative council would be mandated by the people to legislate and issue these slogans and make them a reality.

Once again, we repeat our pride of our democratic experience that has been undertaken by the Palestinian people, and we repeat and we say that democracy can lose a lot of its momentum in the absence of freedom and with the continuation of occupation.

Mr. President, our discussions today have allowed us to inform you of what the Palestinian National Authority is doing and what we are doing in terms of various policies in various spheres. We have worked and we will continue to work to continue to ensure the calm and maintain it. We are also intensifying our work in the field of security. We have taken active steps in imposing the rule of law and public order and banned armed demonstrations.

Our measures are continuing to reinforce the judiciary branch, as well as the administrative reform. We have said and we did during the last week start launching a series of economic projects in the infrastructure and in health and education and agriculture in both Gaza and the West Bank.

And here I would like to salute the United States for its contribution, and also the help that came from a variety of Arab countries and countries around the world. And we hope that all these projects will be activated by the donors' countries in order to increase the number of projects that our people are in need of.

Our discussion of the overall situation in the region has afforded us the opportunity to point out what we reaffirmed repeatedly through the past few weeks on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization: We are determined not to interfere in domestic Lebanese affairs. We reiterate that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are subject to the authority and the laws of Lebanon as temporary guests awaiting the resolution of the refugee problem in the accordance with the international resolutions.

Mr. President, we reaffirm again here today our commitment to peace and negotiated settlement. We expect that our people's quest in this direction will be supported. The time has come to put an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The time has come that the Palestinian people will attain their freedom and independence. The time has come to move quickly towards the resumption of permanent status negotiations.

Peace requires a departure from the policies of occupation and the adoption of the principle of freedom. Peace requires departure from the policies of settlements construction, the collective punishment, unilateral acts that undermine your vision toward two states and replace that with progress towards negotiations. Peace and security cannot be guaranteed by the construction of walls, by the erection of checkpoints, and the confiscation of land, but rather by the recognition of rights.

Peace cannot be attained by the enforcement of discriminatory road policies and by the policies of imposition and creation of facts on the ground, but rather through belief in the principles of partnership, parity and mutual respect.

We are presenting, based on wide public support, our positions that call upon the Israeli side to join us in a real partnership for making peace. We are calling for a Palestinian-Israeli partnership for the sake of creating a better future, and for the entire region that can end decades from wars, occupation, and open the doors wide open. We were promised peace, independence and freedom, and we hope that all of this will be achieved.

Mr. President, once again, I thank you, and reaffirm to you, as we did in our last visit, we are leaving Washington more sure and more confident of the possibility of reviving and resuming the peace process, and more determined to forge ahead along with the path of peace, democracy and freedom. Thank you, Mr. President.



**QUARTET STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE,
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 28 OCTOBER 2005**

Representatives of the Quartet - U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - spoke today on the situation in the Middle East.

The Quartet condemns the October 26 terrorist attack on the Hadera market, responsibility for which was claimed by Palestinian Islamic Jihad, headquartered in Damascus. The Quartet urges the Syrian government to take immediate action to close the offices of Palestinian Islamic Jihad and to prevent the use of its territory by armed groups engaged in terrorist acts.

The Quartet denounces all acts of terrorism and urges all parties to exercise restraint, avoid an escalation of violence, and keep the channels of communication open. The Quartet strongly encourages and supports the Palestinian Authority in its immediate effort to take steps to prevent armed groups from acting against law and order and the policy of the Authority itself.

The Quartet believes it is imperative that all involved act decisively to ensure that terror and violence are not allowed to undermine further progress in accordance with the Roadmap. The Quartet will remain seized of these matters.



**EUROPEAN UNION, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS,
2687TH EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 7 NOVEMBER 2005**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council underlined the need to maintain forward momentum towards full implementation of the Roadmap and of the commitments made at Sharm el Sheikh. It reiterated its commitment to the goal of the coexistence of two States, by the creation of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security. It recalled that the EU will not recognise any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties.
2. The Council condemned unreservedly the recent terrorist attacks on Israel that have resulted in a number of Israeli fatalities and injuries. The Council also condemned the further violence perpetrated by Palestinian militants. While recognising Israel's right to protect its citizens against terrorist attacks, the Council called on Israel to act with restraint and to refrain from all extrajudicial killings, which are contrary to international law.
3. The Council expressed its grave concern at continued violence in Gaza and the West Bank. It underlined the need for the Palestinian Authority to take full control of law and order in the Occupied Territories. The Council also stressed the importance of the Palestinian Authority taking urgent action against Palestinian militants and to dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure.
4. The Council underlined the importance of the forthcoming elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council as an essential element for progress in the peace process. The Council emphasised that violence and terror are incompatible with democratic processes and urged all factions, including Hamas, to renounce violence, recognise Israel's right to exist, and disarm. The Council urged Israel to facilitate the preparations and conduct of the elections, including in occupied East Jerusalem.
5. The Council reiterated its support for the work of James Wolfensohn, the Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement, and welcomed his recent report to the members of the Quartet. It urged the parties to reach rapid agreement on the issues contained in the Rapid Action Plan, including arrangements for Gaza's borders and crossings, the Gaza seaport and airport, movement of goods and people between Gaza and the West Bank, and freedom of movement in the West Bank. The Council called on both Israel and the Palestinians to work with equal determination towards resolution of the outstanding issues. It underlined the importance of progress on these points for the growth of the Palestinian economy, including support to the private sector and in particular SMEs. The Council noted James Wolfensohn's letter of 2 November in which he requested on behalf of the parties that the EU consider playing a third party monitoring role at the Rafah crossing point on the Gaza-Egypt border. The Council noted the EU's willingness in principle to provide assistance with the operation of crossings at Gaza's borders on the basis of an agreement between the parties. It looked forward to receiving a full report from the scoping mission visiting the region, as the basis for an early decision on EU involvement and timely planning.
6. The Council urged the Israeli government to cease all activities in the Palestinian territories, including settlement building, the construction of the separation barrier as well as the demolition of Palestinian homes, which are contrary to international law and threaten to make any solution based on the co-existence of two states physically impossible. The Council was particularly concerned about the implementation of these policies in and around East Jerusalem. The Council called for the re-opening of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem in accordance with the Roadmap, in particular the Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce. It called on the Israeli government to cease all discriminatory treatment of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, especially concerning work permits, access to education and health services, building permits, house demolitions, taxation and expenditure.
7. The Council underlined the important role played by EU COPPS (EU Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support) and by US Security Co-ordinator General Ward in the reform and strengthening of Palestinian security and police structures. In this regard, the Council decided to launch an ESDP Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories to build on the work of EU COPPS. This mission will have a long term reform focus and will provide enhanced support to the Palestinian Authority in establishing sustainable and effective policing arrangements. The new mission, which will have a three-year mandate, will assist in the implementation of the Palestinian Civil Police

- Development Plan, advise and mentor senior members of the Palestinian Civil Police and criminal justice system and co-ordinate EU and, where requested, international assistance to the Palestinian Civil Police. The mission will act in close co-operation with the European Commission's institution building as well as other international efforts in the security sector and judicial reform.
8. The Council welcomed the Commission's detailed Communication entitled "EU-Palestinian co-operation beyond disengagement - towards a two-state solution" and the comprehensive medium term strategy and suggested priorities it sets out for EU engagement with the Palestinians. The Council welcomed the Commission's proposal to consider ways in which EU assistance to the Palestinians could be more effective and coordinated and looked forward to further discussion of this issue.



**EU COMMISSIONER BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER, ADDRESS TO THE
ISRAELI EXPORT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTITUTE AND
THE MANUFACTURER'S ASSOCIATION OF ISRAEL, 13 NOVEMBER 2005**

Prime Minister Sharon, Your Excellencies, Honourable Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First let me thank the Israeli Export and International Cooperation Institute and the Manufacturer's Association of Israel for this invitation.

The European Union is Israel's biggest trading partner - approximately 40% of your imports come from us, and about 30% of your exports come to us. So I am delighted to have this opportunity to participate in the Prime Minister's Conference, Israel's leading economic venue bringing together economic leaders and business people from all over the world.

It is also an important political moment to visit Israel. There are many promising opportunities opening up across the region. But it is clear that Israel also faces threats. I want to take this opportunity to join with other speakers in professing the European Union's unequivocal support for the State of Israel, and utterly condemning last month's shocking statement from President Ahmadi Nejad. Iran's attitude to the State of Israel is completely unacceptable.

For the EU, Israel is an important partner and ally, and we are focused on further improving and developing the potential of our relations. Your invitation to both myself, on behalf of the European Commission, and Gordon Brown, on behalf of the EU Presidency, is symbolic of our shared desire to move closer together. It recognises the upturn in EU-Israeli relations over the last year or so. And that our relations are moving from strength to strength. I see today's conference as part of a pattern of signals we send to each other that we are committed to deepening our relations and to furthering mutual understanding.

When I first visited Israel in my current capacity as European Commissioner, I likened the change in our relations to a fresh breeze. Israel and Europe are natural partners - we share the same values of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law and basic freedoms. And we have much in common - our cultural and historical ties, but also our everyday personal contacts.

So the natural state of our relations should be good. That has not always been the case, so we should not take each other for granted. Rather we must both work hard for progress on the issues which threaten to overshadow our relations, and to make sure that the fresh breeze continues to blow.

There's enormous untapped potential in our relations, on the economic side, but also across the whole spectrum of our relations. Fortunately, we now have the political will and the practical means to exploit this potential. Nearly one year ago, on 13 December, Israel became the first country to agree a European Neighbourhood Action Plan with the EU. The Action Plan gives our relations a new lease of life by laying out a wide range of areas in which we want to work more closely together.

Israel's place in the avantgarde of the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a powerful signal of how important our relationship is to us both. ENP is a new departure for the EU. It is a policy

designed to bring neighbouring countries interested in deeper relations with the EU closer to us. And to promote an area of stability, prosperity, and security for us all.

The EU offers neighbouring countries the opportunity to deepen their political cooperation and their economic integration with us – through inclusion in internal EU programmes and access to the biggest Single Market in the world - in return for working together on issues of mutual concern. Since Israel signed the first Action Plan with the EU we have signed Action Plans with six other partners (Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine) and five more are in preparation (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia and Lebanon).

Action Plans are the European Neighbourhood Policy's principal tool. Each Action Plan is specifically tailored to the country concerned, so that Israel's Action Plan with the EU responds to the particular dynamics of EU-Israel relations. It sets out our mutually agreed vision for our relationship, and detailed commitments for us both for a three year period, to achieve Israel's closer integration with the EU.

Israel's Action Plan covers a wide range of areas. On the political side, the EU and Israel have committed themselves to working together in the battle against anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia and in protecting human rights and minorities. For example we will work together on educating our peoples about the importance of tolerance and respect for all ethnic and religious groups. The events of the past year have only served to underline how vitally important this is.

We will also strengthen our cooperation in the fight against terrorism, and on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. EUROPOL already includes Israel as an observer and will shortly begin negotiations to reach an agreement on a more enhanced level of cooperation.

The plan also covers a number of other areas, including migration, the fight against organised crime and trafficking in human beings. The EU and Israel will enhance links in the spheres of transport, energy, information society, and the environment. Israel is already integrated into key EU projects such as the GALILEO initiative for producing a satellite navigation system, and participates in EU programmes like our Research and Development programme. Thanks to ENP Israelis will be able to join our other programmes, ranging from the cultural to the public health spheres.

ENP is not only about activities for governments and institutions, it is also about people. So the EU-Israel Action Plan targets ways of bringing together our communities, our youth, our students, and civil society.

We want to create a “European Higher Education and Vocational Training Area” to coordinate our systems of study credits and facilitate more student exchanges. We will encourage exchanges of young professionals between Israeli and European bodies, and youth exchanges more generally. And we have already planned a Business Dialogue to take place in the first half of 2006.

An important part of the EU-Israel Action Plan concerns economic integration- which brings me back to the subject of today's conference. Israel is probably in the best position of all the EU's neighbours to benefit from the economic opportunities offered by ENP. Your economy is well-suited to an advanced level of integration with our own, so the prospect of a stake in the EU's single market is not so remote.

In addition, the Action Plan envisages us eventually creating a free-trade zone for services, particularly financial services, thus enabling Israeli firms to compete with ours in areas that were previously closed to you.

That said, much must be done before the possibility becomes a reality. There are many technical issues which must first be resolved, such as harmonising standards and norms. But we have already begun work - since December EU and Israeli officials have met each other on a regular basis to exchange views and discuss cooperation in areas such as consumer protection, standards and conformity assessment, food safety and public procurement. And we have agreed Israel's inclusion in the pan-

Mediterranean system of cumulation of rules of origin, which is key for forging trade and investment links with Israel's neighbours.

Increased economic integration between the EU and Israel cannot be pursued without greater economic cooperation with others. Indeed, in today's globalised world, it is virtually impossible for economies to exist in isolation from one another. That is especially true when it comes to the Israeli and Palestine economies. So for Israel and the EU to reap maximum benefit from the economic possibilities of ENP, there has also to be an improvement in the Palestine economy.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prime Minister Sharon and the Israeli people as a whole for their courageous decision to disengage from the Gaza strip and four West Bank settlements. The EU recognises that this was by no means an easy move to make. But it was the right one. Not only has it withdrawn from areas which were illegally occupied under international law, Israel has also acted in its own long term interests by making a move towards peace and thereby increasing its own security and prosperity.

Of course it takes two to tango, and the Palestinian Authority must live up to its commitments to ensure security within its own territory, and clamp down on terrorist actions. The EU unreservedly condemns all acts of terrorism. Terrorist actions do nothing to further the prospects of peace or to hasten a two-state solution to the conflict.

But the EU hopes that the success of disengagement, and the positive results it has brought in a wider sense, such as Israel's heightened standing in the international community and its new relations with some Muslim states, will encourage it to go further. Certainly, in order to reap the full benefits of disengagement, there must be moves to maintain the momentum and show that the Road Map is back on track.

To make the disengagement from Gaza meaningful for the Palestinians, there must be progress on issues like freedom of movement, borders, trade facilitation. Without that, Palestinians will not see tangible improvements in their living conditions. And without tangible improvements in their living conditions, it will be very hard to convince them that there is a dividend to be earned from peace.

A viable economy in Gaza operating under normal conditions and leading to a higher level of prosperity for ordinary Palestinians is the best possible guarantee of Israel's security.

We just heard from Jim Wolfensohn about the excellent work he is doing on behalf of the Quartet. The European Commission has just issued a Communication on EU-Palestinian cooperation in response to his request for support from Quartet members. The Communication looks beyond disengagement and focuses on efforts to support the economic and political viability of a Palestinian State.

Political viability requires support to reinforce legitimacy and accountability of administrative structures; to strengthen the rule of law and fundamental freedoms; and to improve overall security.

Economic viability requires developing trade relations; building up a customs administration; reconstructing and rehabilitating the West Bank and Gaza Strip; creating the enabling environment for private sector development; and improving the management of public finances. Improving border management by Palestinians and Egyptians will also be key.

The EU proposes a substantial global €80 million package. We are ready to increase the level of our assistance, but only on condition of progress on the recommendations Jim Wolfensohn has set out. We cannot go anywhere without greater freedom of movement for goods and people, simplified customs agreements and links between the West Bank and Gaza. To think otherwise is simply an illusion.

There have been some positive developments. We have used the ENP Action Plans signed with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to facilitate practical initiatives on issues such as trade, energy and transport. And we have provided technical assistance and supported the establishment of joint Israel-Palestinian offices to further coordination and planning of shared energy and transport systems.

This is a positive start, but only a start.

For real progress to be made, tough political decisions have to be taken. Some are for the Palestinian Authority, and I do not wish to downplay the role they must play in bringing us all back to the road map. But in front of this audience I want to address a message to Israel. I speak as a friend and a supporter, one who wishes Israelis to live in the peace and security they deserve, and who hopes for an end to the occasional disagreements which cast a chill over the warm relations that should exist between us.

Israel must desist from expanding settlements. It must cease building the barrier outside the Green Line. And it must end the house demolitions.

All these actions are in Israel's own long term interests, and absolutely vital to a peaceful two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. True friends have a duty to speak the truth, and that is why I say to you today – those tough political decisions must be taken, and must be taken soon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In two weeks time many of you here today will be reunited in Barcelona as we meet to celebrate 10 years of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and to celebrate the historic, cultural and economic links between us. The Barcelona Process, as it is known, is an extremely important forum for bringing nations together, and is still the only regional forum bringing Israel and the Palestinian Authority together.

Israel has been an active participant in the Barcelona Process, and I know has been working hard to make the Summit a success. For me, that is another demonstration of the natural partnership between the EU and Israel, and the extent to which we think alike. There is enormous value to be gained from deepening our relations and working together more closely. I am delighted that, thanks to ENP, we can already see a qualitative difference in the relationship and our contacts are expanding to parts of government and society never reached before.

I hope that this process of drawing closer together will only accelerate in the years to come. Business is infallibly at the cutting edge of developing relations and so it is no surprise that you have taken the lead with this conference. Working together I hope we can consolidate the last year's achievements, both in our bilateral relations and in the region as a whole and move forward to an ever brighter future. I count on your support for the necessary political decisions. And rest assured, you may count on me as a loyal supporter and friend of Israel.



**ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT ON MOVEMENT AND ACCESS,
15 NOVEMBER 2005**

[Agreement on the Gaza Strip border crossings.]

To promote peaceful economic development and improve the humanitarian situation on the ground, the following agreement has been reached. It represents the commitments of the Government of Israel (GoI) and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Its implementation and further elaboration will be assisted by the Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement and his staff and/or the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) and his staff.

1. Rafah

The parties have agreed to the attached statement of principles. Rafah will be opened as soon as it is ready to operate at an international standard in accordance with the specifications of this agreement and as soon as the 3rd party is on site, with a target date of November 25.

2. Crossing Points

The parties have agreed that:

- The passages will operate continuously. On an urgent basis, Israel will permit the export of all agricultural products from Gaza during this 2005 harvest season.
- The new and additional scanner will be installed and fully operational by December 31. At that time, the number of export trucks per day to be processed through Karni will reach 150, and 400 by end-2006. A common management system will be adopted by both parties.
- In addition to the number of trucks above, Israel will permit export of agricultural produce from Gaza and will facilitate its speedy exit and onward movement so that quality and freshness can be maintained. Israel will ensure the continued opportunity to export.

To enhance operation, the parties agree that:

- When a new generation of x-ray equipment able to scan trailers as well as containers becomes available it will be used. Once it arrives in the country, testing will also be carried out with the assistance of the Quartet Special Envoy.
- The USSC will ensure continuing consultation, with unresolved implementation issues to be discussed as needed with the parties. The PA will ensure that the passages will be protected on the Palestinian side of the border and will train and upgrade the management of all crossings to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- The PA will establish, without delay, a unified system of border management.
- The management system that has been developed for Karni should, with suitable local variations, be adapted to the passages at Erez and Kerem Shalom. Israel also undertakes to put in place similar arrangements as appropriate that will make West Bank passages fully operational as soon as possible. A bilateral committee, with participation as needed of the Quartet Special Envoy and/or the USSC, will develop operational procedures for those passages.

3. Link between Gaza and the West Bank

Israel will allow the passage of convoys to facilitate the movements of goods and persons. Specifically:

- Establish bus convoys by December 15.
- Establish truck convoys by January 15.
- Work out detailed implementation arrangements in a bilateral committee of the GoI and PA with participation as needed from the Quartet team and the USSC.

It is understood that security is a prime and continuing concern for Israel and that appropriate arrangements to ensure security will be adopted.

4. Movement within the West Bank

Consistent with Israel's security needs, to facilitate movement of people and goods within the West Bank and to minimize disruption to Palestinian lives, the ongoing work between Israel and the U.S. to establish an agreed list of obstacles to movement and develop a plan to reduce them to the maximum extent possible will be accelerated so that the work can be completed by December 31.

5. Gaza Seaport

Construction of a seaport can commence. The GoI will undertake to assure donors that it will not interfere with operation of the port. The parties will establish a US-led tripartite committee to develop security and other relevant arrangements for the port prior to its opening. The 3rd party model to be used at Rafah will provide the basis for this work.

6. Airport

The parties agree on the importance of the airport. Discussions will continue on the issues of security arrangements, construction, and operation.



AGREED PRINCIPLES FOR THE RAFAH CROSSING, 15 NOVEMBER 2005

To be supplemented prior to opening by agreements on security, customs and 3rd party implementation procedures.

General

- Rafah will be operated by the Palestinian Authority on its side, and Egypt on its side, according to international standards, in accordance with Palestinian law and subject to the terms of this agreement.
- Rafah will be opened as soon as it is ready to operate at an international standard in accordance with the specifications of this agreement and as soon as the 3rd party is on site, with a target date of November 25.
- Use of the Rafah crossing will be restricted to Palestinian ID card holders and others by exception in agreed categories with prior notification to the GoI and approval of senior PA leadership.
- The PA will notify the GoI 48 hours in advance of the crossing of a person in the excepted categories - diplomats, foreign investors, foreign representatives of recognized international organizations and humanitarian cases.
- The GoI will respond within 24 hours with any objections and will include the reasons for the objections;
- The PA will notify the GoI of their decision within 24 hours and will include the reasons for their decision;
- The 3rd party will ensure the proper procedures are followed and will advise both sides of any information in its possession pertaining to the people applying to cross under these exceptions.
- These procedures will remain in place for a period of 12 months, unless the 3rd party delivers a negative evaluation of the PA running the Rafah crossing. This evaluation will be done in close coordination with both sides and will give due consideration to the opinion of both sides.
- Rafah will also be used for export of goods to Egypt.
- Objective criteria for the inspection of cars will be established by consensus.

The criteria are as follows:

- Search equipment will be installed, including:
- Black lights.
- Power tools and a compressor for the tools.
- Technology to be agreed, possibly including sonic imagery, gamma detection (full vehicle or hand held), and/or millimeter wave imagery.
- Mirrors and bore scope equipment to search hard to reach places.
- Personnel will be trained to search vehicles and on the use of this equipment by the 3rd party to international standards.
- Cameras will be installed to monitor the search process.
- The 3rd party will evaluate the capacity of the PA to inspect cars according to these criteria and to international standards. Once the PA develops the capacity to inspect cars to the satisfaction of the 3rd party, cars will be allowed to pass through Rafah. Until that time, cars will pass through on an exceptional basis, subject to specifications agreed in the security protocol.
- Rafah will be the only crossing point between the Gaza Strip and Egypt (with the exception of Kerem Shalom for the agreed period). The PA will establish clear operating procedures.
- Until Rafah is operational, the PA will open Rafah crossing on an ad hoc basis for religious pilgrims, medical patients, and others, in coordination with General Gilad's office on the Israeli side.
- Israel will provide the PA with all information needed to update the Palestinian population registry, including all information on Palestinian ID card holders who are currently outside the country.
- A liaison office, led by the 3rd party, will receive real-time video and data feed of the activities at Rafah and will meet regularly to review implementation of this agreement, resolve any disputes arising from this agreement, and perform other tasks specified in this agreement.

Security

- The PA will act to prevent the movement of weapons and explosives at the Rafah crossing.

- The PA will establish baggage limits for each passenger as part of the procedures. Limits will be the same as currently applied by the GoI; very frequent travellers (suitcase policy) to be agreed.
- Travellers, including returning residents, may use the crossing point to bring in personal effects as defined in Rule 1(e) to Heading 7 of the Annex to the prevailing Customs Tariff. Any other personal belongings or other goods shall be cleared at the Kerem Shalom crossing point.
- The PA will provide the 3rd party a list of names of the workers at Rafah crossing which will be shared with the Israelis. The PA will take the Israelis concerns into account.
- Security services from Israel, PA, the U.S., and Egypt will continue to coordinate on security issues and will participate in the security working group.
- On a case by case basis, the PA will consider information on persons of concern provided by the GoI. The PA will consult with the GoI and the 3rd party prior to the PA making a decision to prohibit travel or not. During this consultation, which will not take more than six hours, the person in question will not be permitted to cross.

Customs

- GoI and PA will continue to apply the Paris Protocol of 29 April 1994.
- Rafah will be operated according to international standards and rules and the Paris Protocol.
- GoI and PA agree on widest possible co-operation and information sharing. GoI and PA will co-operate on training issues.
- GoI and PA customs will hold regular meetings to which the GoE will be invited as appropriate.

Kerem Shalom

- PA customs officials will clear incoming cargo at Kerem Shalom under the supervision of Israeli customs agents.
- Both sides will discuss operating procedures at a later stage.
- Operations at Kerem Shalom will provide training and capacity building to PA customs staff.
- The 3rd party will review the PA's customs capacity in 12 months and make a recommendation to both sides for a joint decision regarding future arrangements. In the event of a disagreement, the U.S., in consultation with the GoI, the PA, and the 3rd party, will resolve the issue expeditiously.

Third party

- The 3rd party will have the authority to ensure that the PA complies with all applicable rules and regulations concerning the Rafah crossing point and the terms of this agreement. In case of non-compliance the 3rd party has the authority to order the re-examination and reassessment of any passenger, luggage, vehicle or goods. While the request is being processed, the person, luggage, vehicle or cargo in question will not be allowed to leave the premises of the Rafah crossing point.
- The 3rd party will assist the PA to build capacity - training, equipment and technical assistance - on border management and customs.
- Details of the 3rd party's role are specified in the attached memorandum of understanding.
- The 3rd party will be the European Union.



**TEHRAN DECLARATION, 13TH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES,
TEHRAN, 20-21 NOVEMBER 2005**

The Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Members States (PUIC), holding its 13th Meeting in Tehran, capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on 18-19 Shawal 1426H, corresponding to 20-21 November 2005, and having discussed issues prevailing at the international and regional level, declares the following:

- Standing by the side of the Palestinian people in their just struggle to realize their right to self-determination and establish their independent State with Al-Quds Al- Sharif as its capital.
- Affirming the application of the resolutions of the international legitimacy 194, 242 and 338 adopted by the United Nations relating to the cause of the Palestinian people.

- Condemning the savage Israeli aggressions and state terrorism practiced against the unarmed Palestinian people such as demolition of houses, bulldozing agricultural lands and proceeding with building the separation wall despite the ruling issued by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004, providing for the immediate halting of building, pulling down the already built part and paying compensation for the losses sustained by the Palestinian citizens.
- Stressing the right of peoples to self-determination and the withdrawal of all forces of occupation from all Arab and Islamic territories.
- Also stressing the unity of the people, territory and state of Iraq and highlighting the constructive dialogue among all sections and national accord in such way as to serve the higher interests of the Iraqi people and expedite the departure of foreign occupying forces. Also appealing to the forces concerned to seek the release of all hostages and abducted persons.
- Putting on record its stand by the side of Syria in the face of pressures mounted against it by some super powers in order to force it to submit to U.S. conditions and diktats which eventually serve Israel, while (the Committee) stressing respect for international legitimacy.
- Affirming the unity and total sovereignty of Lebanon to take the decisions that ensure the unity of the Lebanese people and their interests which are linked to their Arab and Islamic Ummah as well as its stability and rejection of all interference in its internal affairs.
- Putting on record its intense concern over the political pressures against the Islamic Republic of Iran carried out by super powers aimed at preventing it from possessing nuclear energy technology for peaceful purposes which is a right for all states according to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- Stressing the right of all states to acquire the nuclear energy technology for peaceful purposes to ensure progress and scientific development of their peoples and requesting international organizations, particularly the United Nations, to seek making the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear arms. Condemning the policy of double standards as practiced by super powers and some international organizations which disregard the illegal nuclear activities carried out by Israel.
- Expressing concern over the illegal intervention in the internal affairs of the Middle East States aimed at implementing designs for controlling the natural resources of the region, which runs counter to the principle of sovereignty of peoples.
- Condemning terrorism in all parts of the world and in its various forms or under any disguise. Also condemning linking terrorism to Islam as the latter is a religion of tolerance, equality and brotherhood. Further condemning all campaigns and attempts seeking to obliterate the image of Islam.
- Stressing the necessity of strengthening the values of democracy, freedom of opinion and expression as well as human rights. Also stressing the right of peoples to contribute to the building and developing of their societies.
- Affirming that the dialogue of civilizations, cultures and religions is the only way for promoting and consolidating peace, security and stability in the world.
- Calling on Islamic countries to develop and promote cooperation among themselves in the various fields and areas, especially the economic domain, by establishing various joint-ventures and strengthening commercial exchange.
- Expressing sympathy with the brotherly Pakistani people, parliament and government following the earthquake disaster which recently afflicted the country, and inviting Islamic States and peoples to extend assistance to this sisterly country for the reconstruction of the areas affected by the catastrophe.



**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA, ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, PUTRAJAYA, 29 NOVEMBER 2005**

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people I have the honour to extend on behalf of Malaysia and the Non-Aligned Movement, our warmest greetings to His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian National Authority, as well as all our

Palestinian brothers and sisters and to express our solidarity with them. We are commemorating this Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians, a day that continues to witness their continuing oppression and suffering under Israeli occupation.

2. On this solemn occasion, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its continued and unequivocal support for and longstanding solidarity with the Palestinian people and their leadership for their legitimate and courageous struggle in their long-standing quest for the full realization of their inalienable rights, to become masters of their own destiny and to live freely in their own sovereign and independent State of Palestine, within secure and recognised borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.
3. Yet, as we observe this International Day of Solidarity, we continue to witness violence, death and suffering inflicted upon the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying power. We remain firm in our condemnation of the harsh policies and practices as well as the disproportionate and excessive use of force by Israel against the Palestinian people, the destruction of Palestinian homes and property and restriction of the freedom of movement of people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We urge Israel to reverse the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and socio-economic condition in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We stress that there must be greater commitment and sincerity in the move towards peace.
4. The Movement continues to be concerned at the lack of real progress in the implementation of the Road Map more than two years since its adoption. We take note, however, of the recent agreement brokered by the United States to provide access at the border between Gaza and Egypt. We call for its full implementation as quickly as possible. We urge the United States to sustain the momentum of securing full freedom for the Gaza as part of the steps in finding a permanent solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. While we welcome Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, the Movement insists that the measure should be seen as part of the Road Map, not outside of it, and that it should be quickly followed by similar steps in the West Bank.
5. We would also like to urge the Palestinian leadership to seize the opportunity to build upon the advances made thus far and work to secure more progress in finding solutions to the question of Palestine.
6. Clearly, there is an urgent need for the international community, in particular the Quartet, to work towards ensuring the early and full implementation of the Road Map, with earnestness and sincerity. It is imperative that renewed efforts by the Quartet to salvage the Road Map be further strengthened in order to ensure its early and full implementation. The Movement remains convinced that the Quartet can and will fulfill its role and responsibility in this regard. Concrete steps towards peace are important in order to give the Palestinian people hope for the future, lest they succumb to despair and despondency, with all its negative ramifications.
7. The continued construction by Israel of the Separation Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has only contributed to further exacerbating the peace process, undermining and destroying the very foundations of political dialogue between the two sides that had been painstakingly laid down by the Quartet. In spite of the Advisory Opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice in July 2004, Israel continues to construct the wall and expand its settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as well as the systematic seizure of large tracts of Palestinian lands and housing in East Jerusalem. These provocative actions are certainly not conducive to the peace process and have raised questions about Israel's real intentions. The Non-Aligned Movement urges all Member States, in particular Israel, to take all measures necessary to ensure compliance with the Advisory Opinion and General Assembly Resolution ES-10/15.
8. The international community cannot deny that any further deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory would be detrimental to the cause of peace in the whole region. The international community must lend its support to mend the situation, imbued in mistrust and antipathy. The time to act is now.
9. The Israeli government cannot continue to ignore the agreements, accords and understandings arrived at between the two sides and its internationally recognized mediators. Israel must abandon terror tactics in favour of constructive dialogue and engagement with the Palestinians. Clearly, the international community must do more to manifest its support for a just resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

10. The international community has a collective role to play in finding a solution to the Palestinian question. We must all work together to facilitate the attainment of peace in the region. The Non Aligned Movement and Malaysia as its Chairman have launched several initiatives in its continuing efforts concerning the Question of Palestine. These include the holding of the annual Ministerial Meeting of the NAM Committee on Palestine in New York last September and meetings between the NAM Ministerial Delegation on Palestine and other Members of the Quartet and Permanent Members of the Security Council.
11. In addition and mindful of the need to promote a people-based global campaign involving civil society in support of Palestine, Malaysian civil society organizations, under the sponsorship of Peace Malaysia, had successfully organized a World Civil Society Conference on “Peace in Palestine” in Putrajaya in March 2005, which was attended by representatives of civil society organisations from many parts of the world, including Israel. The Conference agreed, inter alia, to establish an International Centre on Palestine for Civil Society in the South to be situated in Malaysia, to serve as the focal point in the global civil society campaign in support of Palestine. It is our hope that this international campaign will be able to mobilise international public opinion against the continued Israeli occupation and in support of the early realisation of a sovereign State of Palestine.
12. Finally, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and in Malaysia’s capacity as its Chairman, I would like to reiterate on this very important day, our firm commitment towards ensuring that a just, comprehensive and lasting peaceful settlement is achieved on the question of Palestine in its entirety. Rest assured that the Non-Aligned Movement will strongly support all initiatives and efforts to address the Palestinian question; a question which has at all time been high on its agenda. The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to cooperate with the international community towards this end. The United Nations, including the General Assembly and the Security Council, must be seized with the question of Palestine until it is resolved in its entirety on the basis of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law. We look forward to the day when the international community would join the Palestinians in celebrating their independence and statehood soon.



**QUARTET STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE,
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 5 DECEMBER 2005**

Representatives of the Quartet - U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, U.K. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - consulted today on the situation in the Middle East.

The Quartet condemns today’s terrorist attack in Netanya in the strongest possible terms. Representatives of Palestinian Islamic Jihad have claimed responsibility for the bombing through al-Manar television. The Quartet repeats its demand that the Syrian government take immediate action to close the offices of Palestinian Islamic Jihad and to prevent the use of its territory by armed groups engaged in terrorist acts.

The Quartet denounces all acts of terrorism and urges all parties to exercise restraint, avoid an escalation of violence, and keep the channels of communication open. The Quartet encourages and supports the Palestinian Authority’s efforts to take immediate steps to prevent armed groups from acting against law and order and the policy of the Authority itself. The Quartet reiterates its support for efforts to assist the Palestinian Authority in the reform and restructuring of its security services.

The Quartet believes it is imperative that all involved act decisively to ensure that terror and violence are not allowed to undermine further progress in accordance with the Roadmap.

The Quartet will remain seized of these matters.



**FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 3RD EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE
ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE, MECCA, 7-8 DECEMBER 2005**

In response to the kind invitation addressed from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz to his brothers and sister, the leaders of the Muslim Ummah, the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference was held in Makkah Al Mukarramah on 5-6 Dhul Qa'adah 1426 H (7-8 December 2005).

The Summit Conference was inaugurated by recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an. Then the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz, delivered a speech in which he stressed that a strong Muslim believer in his Lord does not despair in God's mercy and that Islamic unity will never be realized through the shedding of blood as misguided deviants assume. Extremism, fanaticism and excommunication will not take root in a land endowed with the spirit of tolerance and the dissemination of moderation. He affirmed his aspiration to the rise of a unified Islamic Ummah; a rule that eradicates injustice and oppression; comprehensive Islamic development targeting the removal of destitution and poverty; the spread of reason and moderation that characterize the tolerance of Islam; Muslim inventors and industrialists; an advanced Islamic technology; and to a Muslim youth who equally works for this life and the hereafter.

The Conference was also addressed by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, His Excellency Dato Seri Abdullah bin Ahmed Badawi, in his capacity as Chairman of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference. In his statement, he stressed that the Muslim Ummah could no longer be in a state of denial and that the causes for the miserable conditions in which it finds itself today must be confronted and addressed in a holistic manner, *inter alia*, through building capacities as well as the projection of the true image of Islam and its civilizational approaches. He informed that Malaysia had offered to host meetings to discuss good governance and the establishment of a rapid response mechanism to alleviate the impact of natural disasters in OIC Member States.

Addressing the opening session, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, reviewed the current situation of the OIC and the appropriate place it is aspiring to occupy on the international scene, taking into account the huge global developments and the need for strategic planning so as to keep abreast of these developments in such a way that safeguards the supreme interests of the Muslim world and enables it to preserve its identity, civilization and lofty human values as a fundamental factor for the cohesion of the fabric of the Muslim societies and the strengthening of their social stability.

Having taken cognizance of the reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Meeting of Foreign Ministers Preparatory to the Extraordinary Summit, and having discussed the issues on its agenda, the Conference decided to adopt the Makkah Declaration and the Ten-Year Programme of Action to Meet the Challenges Facing the Ummah in the 21st Century, and declared as follows:

I- In the Intellectual Field

The Summit reaffirmed that Islam is a religion of moderation which rejects bigotry, extremism and fanaticism, and underlined in this connection the importance of combating deviant ideology using all available means, besides developing educational curricula that firmly establish the values of understanding, tolerance, dialogue and multilateralism in accordance with the tenets of Islam.

The Conference stressed that dialogue among civilizations based on mutual respect, understanding and equality between people, is a prerequisite for establishing a world marked by tolerance, cooperation, peace and confidence among nations.

The Conference called for combating pseudo-religious and sectarian extremism, and for the need to refrain from accusing followers of Islamic schools of heresy, and reaffirmed the need to deepen dialogue and promote restraint, moderation and tolerance and issuance of Fatwas by those not eligible to issue them.

The Conference underlined the importance of reforming the Islamic Fiqh Academy such as to make it the jurisprudential authority of the Ummah.

II- In the Political Field

The Conference stressed the importance of the question of Palestine as the central cause of the Muslim Ummah. The ending of the Israeli occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan and the remaining occupied Lebanese territories in compliance with Security Council Resolution 425, constitutes a vital request for the entire Muslim Ummah. This question should unify the Muslim position regarding the comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with the United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Roadmap. Efforts should be made to regain the city of Al-Quds, safeguard its Islamic and historical character, preserve and protect Al-Aqsa Mosque and other sacred sites, counter the judaization of the Holy City, support the Palestinian institutions in the city, and establish Al-Aqsa University in the city of Al-Quds. It Conference called for support to the Waqf of Al-Quds Fund with each Muslim individual contributing one dollar, besides contributions by Member States in order to preserve the holy sites in the city of Al-Quds, including in particular Al-Aqsa Mosque, safeguard the sacred city's cultural and historic landmarks and Arab-Islamic identity, and strengthen the steadfastness of its population so that it may regain its character as a city of coexistence and tolerance and the capital of the State of Palestine. The Conference reiterated working hand in hand with the international community to cease and dismantle settlements in the occupied territories. It also called for a halt in the building of the Separation Wall and its demolition in accordance with the Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

The Summit Conference discussed the developments in Iraq and welcomed the Arab Initiative for National Accord among the Iraqi parties, and hoped that the forthcoming legislative elections would lead to a constitutional Iraqi government so as to safeguard the country's unity and territorial integrity to ensure peace, security, stability and enable the brotherly Iraq to play its civilizational role on the Arab, Islamic and international arenas and condemned the terrorist violence faced by the Iraqi people. It supported the political process and the completion of building constitutional institutions as well as Iraqi reconstruction. The Conference further stressed the importance of the role of the UN in Iraq in cooperation with the OIC.

The Conference extended its support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir for their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. It called for respect of the human rights of the Kashmiri people and agreed to provide all possible political and diplomatic support to the true representatives of the Kashmiri people in their struggle against foreign occupation.

The Conference expressed its firm determination to act in solidarity with the Muslim Turkish Cypriot people and their rightful cause, through supporting the efforts within the UN framework to find a comprehensive, fair and lasting settlement of the problem on the basis of political equality, as well as through taking concrete steps towards the elimination of all restrictions isolating the Turkish Cypriots.

The Conference again welcomed the comprehensive peace agreement in Sudan and the resolution adopted by the 10th Islamic Summit Conference regarding the creation of a Fund for the Reconstruction of War-Affected areas in Sudan, and urged Member States to effectively contribute to this Fund.

The Conference reiterated its support for the Somali Government in its efforts to restore security and achieve reconstruction.

The Conference also reiterated its condemnation of the continued Armenian aggression against the sovereignty of Azerbaijan and its territorial integrity and called for complete and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The Conference emphasized commitment to and credibility of Joint Islamic Action through implementation of Islamic resolutions, particularly as regard the display of Islamic solidarity in the face of

natural disasters, etc., and countering foreign threats that jeopardize the security of any OIC Member State in a collective manner and rejected unilateral sanctions, which may be imposed against any Member State. The Conference also stressed the need to reform the OIC with a view to further energizing its institutions and enhance its role.

The Conference stressed the need to condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, reject any justification for it, and declared its solidarity with Member States which have been victims of terrorism and again stated the necessity to criminalize all terrorist practices and all forms of their support, finance and instigation, considering terrorism a global phenomenon not related to any religion, race, color or country. The Conference emphasized also the importance of joining international efforts to combat this phenomenon, and to endeavor to implement the recommendations adopted by the International Counter-Terrorism Conference, held in Riyadh in 2005, including the creation of an International Center for Combating Terrorism, as well as the need to differentiate between terrorism and the legitimate resistance to foreign occupation. The Conference also stressed the need to support the efforts aimed at drawing up an International Code of Conduct for Combating Terrorism, as well as the need to hold an international conference for special session of the United Nations General Assembly to affirm international agreement on laying down a coherent strategy for combating this dangerous phenomenon.

The Conference underlined the need to collectively endeavor to reflect the noble Islamic values, counter Islamophobia, defamation of Islam and its values and desecration of Islamic holy sites, and to effectively coordinate with States as well as regional and international institutions and organizations to urge them to criminalize this phenomenon as a form of racism.

The Conference expressed its concern at rising hatred against Islam and Muslims in the world and condemned the recent incident of desecration of the image of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) in the media of certain countries and stressed the responsibility of all governments to ensure full respect of all religions and religious symbols and the inapplicability of using the freedom of expression as a pretext to defame religions.

The Conference emphasized the importance of promoting cooperation and dialogue with non-OIC member states with Muslim communities and their true representatives to preserve their rights and continue to carefully monitor the developments.

The Conference called for considering the possibility of establishing an independent permanent body to promote human rights in Member States as well as the possibility in preparing an Islamic Charter on Human Rights in accordance with the provisions of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and interact with the United Nations and other relevant international bodies. The Conference further highlighted importance of promoting women's rights and education and welcomed Turkey's offer to host the First OIC Women's Conference.

The Conference stressed the need for the media in the Muslim world to project the true and bright image of our Islamic religion, and to effectively deal with international media to attain this objective. It also called for the revitalization of the Standing Committee for Information and Culture (COMIAC) and underlined the importance of extending support to the Digital Solidarity Fund in order to develop information society in the Muslim countries.

III- In the Economic and Social Field

The Conference emphasized the need to make optimal use of the human, natural and economic resources of the Muslim world in order to promote this cooperation, consider the possibility of establishing a Free Trade Area among the Member States, and accede and implement the agreements and resolutions concluded, and support the activities of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC).

The Conference stressed the need to achieve a considerable increase in intra-OIC trade, and welcomed the establishment of the Islamic Corporation for Trade Finance in response to the initiative of

the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques launched at the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference, calling for this institution to expeditious start its work. The Conference also called for increase in the capital of the Islamic Development Bank in order to enable it to meet the needs of Member States, and reaffirmed the vital role played by the private sector in development.

The Conference underlined the importance of cooperation in the fields of poverty alleviation, capacity building, elimination of illiteracy, and eradication of diseases and epidemics such as AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis and the need to mobilize the necessary resources to this end by establishing a special fund within the IDB. The Conference mandated the IDB Board of Governors to implement this proposal. With reference to the call of the United Nations Secretary General to eradicate Polio, the Conference stressed the significance of international efforts exerted in this regard, especially that OIC Member States are the most affected by the disease.

The Conference called for support to African development and the NEPAD initiative and decided to set up a Special Programme to this end. It reaffirmed commitment to the Millennium Development Goals by adopting appropriate measures to alleviate poverty in the Member States, and urged creditor States to write off the bilateral and multilateral debts of low-income Member States. The Conference also encouraged Member States' initiatives aimed at promoting economic cooperation with the rest of Member States and with the Least Developed and Low-Income States Members of the OIC.

The Conference decided to take practical steps to achieve scientific and technological development, with a view to supporting sustainable development in OIC Member States. The Conference stressed the importance of the resolutions and recommendations issued by the World Summit on the Information Society held in Tunis, Republic of Tunisia, and called for their implementation in order to reduce the digital gap between States and achieve civilizational progress.

The Conference extended gratitude and appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its generous hospitality and for its continuing support to the OIC and its General Secretariat. It also expressed gratitude and appreciation to the OIC Secretary General for his efforts to bring a new spirit and vision for the Organization marked by efficiency and effectiveness. It also highly commended the officials of the General Secretariat for their professionalism and excellent work and for having performed the task assigned to them with utmost dedication and in a record time.



**JOINT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PRIVATE SECTOR DECLARATION,
CONFERENCE ON PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN WEST BANK AND GAZA,
LONDON, 13 DECEMBER 2005**

[The declaration was signed in the presence of the Right Honorable Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, UK, Christiaan J. Poortman, World Bank Vice-Pres. for the Middle East and North Africa, PA Min. of National Economy Mazen Sinokrot, and Dr. Joseph Bachar, Dir.-Gen., Israeli Finance Min.]

Preamble

1. The Palestinian and Israeli private sectors have accepted the invitation of Her Majesty's Treasury and the World Bank to develop a Declaration which sets out the steps required for promoting Palestinian economic growth and their expectations from the Palestinian Authority, Government of Israel and the international community.
2. It is widely recognized that the Palestinian economy needs to return to productive levels commensurate with its economic capacity in order to generate employment, create prosperity and reduce poverty. The private sector will be the driving force for economic growth and development.
3. The Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the international community have critical roles in achieving sustainable development in the West Bank and Gaza. An open and thriving Palestinian economy will help lay the foundation for a sustainable peace, and a sustainable peace will require an economically and politically viable, liberated and independent Palestinian state.

Section One: Main Objectives

4. There are valuable business and investment opportunities for Palestinian, Israeli and international investors. The points included in this Declaration are aimed at promoting business activity throughout the West Bank and Gaza by:
- Reducing physical impediments and ensuring that measures to increase reliability and efficiency of movement of goods and people are defined and implemented
 - Identifying measures to be put in place to protect the activities of investors and their businesses
 - Reducing the legal and regulatory obstacles to investment facing both domestic and international investors.

Section Two: Developing the Palestinian Economy

5. Projects in industry, infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, information and communications technology and logistics services, among others, are the most promising means for rapid economic revival, generating employment and creating prosperity.
6. Small and Medium-sized enterprises should be promoted, including the provision of appropriate financial incentives. An interactive environment between small and medium-sized enterprises in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza should be encouraged.
7. The governments should ensure equal treatment and should work to create a level playing field for Palestinian businesses to compete in both local and international markets.
8. The Palestinian and Israeli governments and the international community should aim to create an environment that:
- Promotes the recovery and development of the Palestinian economy
 - Supports private enterprise development and investment in all economic sectors including through the provision of risk guarantees
 - Encourages joint ventures and cooperation
 - Helps Palestinian businesses develop a competitive edge for competing in the global market.
9. The provisions of the Protocol on Economic Relations (Paris Protocol) for trade relations between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel should be reaffirmed until a renegotiated agreement is reached.

Section Three: Transparency and the Establishment of the Rule of Law

10. The Israeli and Palestinian private sectors stress the importance of good governance, transparency and accountability in supporting good business practices and economic growth. As such, the private sectors call for efficient and effective Government that is responsive to the needs of both local and international investors.
11. The rule of law and a clear regulatory framework are essential for supporting private sector activities. A responsible fiscal policy is required that does not crowd out private investment and which can provide the incentives necessary to encourage business opportunities and private sector employment.

Section Four: Infrastructure and Public Private Partnerships

12. The Palestinian and Israeli private sectors support the development of public-private partnerships to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector and donor funds.
13. The construction, opening and continuous operation of an efficient and competitive seaport is essential. Construction and operation should begin as quickly as possible with the participation of the private sector.
14. The Israeli and Palestinian private sectors emphasize the importance of a well-functioning and secure airport in Gaza to facilitate the movement of people and goods. The reconstruction and operation of the airport should involve the participation of the private sector.
15. A reliable and cost-effective road and transportation infrastructure within the West Bank and Gaza is required to support business activity. The Palestinian and Israeli private sectors support the ongoing study which is examining options for a link between Gaza and the West Bank.

Section Five: Security

16. A secure environment is a precondition for economic growth. It is the responsibility of both governments to take steps to ensure that businesses can operate in safety, and that Palestinian, Israeli

and international investors and the business community can travel and work in an open, safe and efficient manner.

Section Six: Facilitation of Movement

17. Movement needs to be vastly improved within the West Bank and Gaza and across the borders to Israel, Egypt and Jordan. In this regard, the Israeli and Palestinian private sectors welcome the Agreement reached between the two governments as a positive step towards improving the border crossings, internal movement and links with third countries.
18. The Palestinian and Israeli private sectors support cost-effective and reliable routes for people traveling in and out of the West Bank and Gaza. The new system should include procedures and technologies that ensure that intact, undamaged cargo can move continuously, securely and swiftly across borders and to markets.
19. The Israeli and Palestinian private sectors appeal to the international community, including donors, the World Bank, the Quartet and foreign governments to ensure that the agreed procedures for the movement of people and goods, essential for revitalizing the private sector, are implemented. We call on the two governments to do everything possible to fulfill their commitments.

Section Seven: Action Plan

20. The Palestinian and Israeli private sectors need to be active participants in ensuring that the principles of this Declaration are adhered to and implemented. We, therefore, set out a plan of action to help ensure that progress is made towards Palestinian economic recovery through development of the private sector:
 - A Steering Committee will be established to promote and protect the principles and spirit of this Declaration, including the steps outlined in the Action Plan. This will be supported by regular meetings between members of the Private Sector Working Group, as well as other Israeli and Palestinian business associations. The Private Sector Working Group requests that the World Bank facilitate their work and that of the Steering Committee.
 - The Steering Committee will hold regular dialogue with the donor community including the World Bank, the Quartet Special Envoy, the UK and other key bilateral donors who support the Palestinian private sector, to advance the steps called for in the Declaration and to discuss plans and projects designed to support private sector development.
 - The Steering Committee will hold quarterly consultations with Palestinian and Israeli Government representatives to discuss and overcome obstacles that the private sector continues to face.

The Palestinian and Israeli private sectors support the involvement of all private sectors in the Investors Conference which is planned for the West Bank and Gaza in April 2006 and to build on the activities highlighted in this London conference.



UNITED NATIONS LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, CARACAS, 13-14 DECEMBER 2005

CARACAS DECLARATION

1. The United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held in Caracas, on 13 and 14 December 2005, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people. Its theme was "Achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people – the key to peace in the Middle East." Participants in the Meeting included international experts, representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities, parliaments, civil society and the media.
2. The Meeting was convened by the Committee with a view to sensitizing international public opinion, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, to the situation of the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation, the need to assist the Israelis and Palestinians to return to a

meaningful political dialogue, and the importance of reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The participants reviewed the situation on the ground, discussed international efforts in searching for a settlement of Palestine and the support of Latin American and Caribbean countries in this endeavour.

3. In this context, an extensive debate was held on the agenda item proposed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, entitled "Humanitarian and socio-economic challenges faced by the Palestinian people", with a view to giving greater human visibility to the Palestinian cause. The point is to make international organizations much more aware of the totally defenceless position of Palestinian children, women and men in the Occupied Territory, in that they have been deprived of their human rights, in particular their social rights, and therefore their right to lead a dignified life. From this perspective, the participants agreed to call on the international community and the various United Nations organs and bodies to work together more closely to solve the serious problems of education, health, housing, land cultivation and lack of jobs, among other things, that adversely affect the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territory. Likewise, they agreed to keep the issue on the agenda of Regional Meetings as well as of the Committee.
4. The Meeting was held amidst renewed hopes for a resumption in the stalled peace process following recent positive political developments, as well as concerns over renewed violence on the ground. The participants viewed the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank, completed in September 2005, as a positive first step that could re-ignite negotiations within the framework of the Road Map aimed at bringing about the establishment of an independent, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. The participants called for the implementation of the understandings reached at Sharm el-Sheikh, especially returning to the situation in the West Bank before September 2000 and the freeing of Palestinian prisoners. The participants noted the recent Agreement on Movement and Access reached between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority on control over movement of people and goods between the Gaza Strip and Egypt as well as between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, calling for its timely and full implementation. The participants called for the expeditious resolution of all unresolved issues in the Gaza Strip, including the clearing of the rubble, the opening of the airport and the construction of a seaport, and for Israel to fulfil its obligations as an occupying Power under international humanitarian law.
5. The participants welcomed the Palestinian Authority's continued efforts at building democratic institutions, as well as introducing comprehensive reform of the security services. They supported the Palestinian people's holding of municipal elections in 2005 and its determination to hold legislative elections scheduled for 25 January 2006. The participants called on Israel, the occupying Power, to stop interfering with the election process and to assist the Palestinian side and grant freedom of movement to candidates and voters during the campaign and voting period, including in East Jerusalem, and to allow Palestinian prisoners in Israel to participate. Noting the importance of parliamentary elections for Palestinian reform, the participants called on the international community to help the Palestinians in holding free, open and fair elections.
6. The participants condemned the recent resumption by Israel, the occupying Power, of military incursions and extrajudicial killings that threaten to unravel the fragile truce agreed to by Palestinian groups, provoke feelings of hatred and despair, and undo what progress has already been achieved. At the same time, the participants condemned all attacks by militants against civilians in Israel. These undermine prospects of building trust and confidence between the parties.
7. The participants strongly condemned the continuing construction of the wall and the expansion of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in defiance of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. The participants were greatly dismayed at the continued settlement activities in the West Bank, particularly, the plan to connect to East Jerusalem the largest settlement of "Ma'aleh Adumim". In the view of the participants, the combination of the continued settlement activity and the building of the wall was creating new and significant facts on the ground making a two-State solution extremely difficult to attain.
8. The participants expressed the view that the long-standing conflict would have no final solution without the achievement of the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights defined by the General Assembly in 1974 as the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and

- property, from which they had been displaced and uprooted, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions.
9. The participants commended the international donor assistance to the Palestinian people and emphasized its continued critical importance, especially at this post-disengagement period when timely aid was key to rebuilding the devastated economy and alleviating the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. They called on Israel to lift all measures that deny the Palestinian people access to essential services and markets.
 10. The participants expressed support for efforts at helping the parties move towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their position was that those efforts should be pursued in keeping with Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 1397, and 1515 the principle of a permanent two-State solution to the conflict, based on the 1967 borders, the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and the right of all States to live in peace and security.
 11. The participants reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine, until it is resolved in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and norms of international law, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized in all aspects.
 12. The participants called on the Latin American and Caribbean States members of the Committee to redouble their efforts to promote the incorporation of other countries of the region as members or observers, with a view to strengthening the Committee's efforts to achieve peace and respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.
 13. The participants in the Meeting welcomed the Brasilia Declaration, adopted on 11 May 2005 at the South American and Arab Countries Summit, which had reaffirmed the need to reach a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of the principle of land for peace and relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the Madrid framework and the Arab Peace Initiative that ensured the realization of security for all countries in the region. The Declaration had also highlighted the necessity of the full implementation of the Road Map and the materialization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.
 14. The participants welcomed the pledge of Governments of Latin American and Caribbean, inter-governmental organizations, civil society representatives, to exert all efforts to support the peace process and its successful conclusion. They noted that Latin American and Caribbean States, having had a long experience in their struggle for self-determination, independence and national sovereignty, should continue their moral, political and material support to the Palestinian people.
 15. The participants voiced their appreciation for the active and constructive role played by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, an Observer in the Committee, in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. The participants expressed its deep gratitude to the Government of Venezuela for hosting the Meeting and to the Ministry for External Relations for the assistance and support extended to the Committee and the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.



**US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, RESOLUTION 575,
WASHINGTON, DC, 16 DECEMBER 2005**

[The US House of Congress voted 397-17 in favor of the following resolution:]

Whereas the foundation for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist and a solemn obligation to end terrorism and violence;

Whereas the removal of all Israeli presence in Gaza signifies an end to Israeli responsibility there and a shift in security responsibility of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority;

Whereas Israel's evacuation of Gaza affords the Palestinian Authority, now the responsible governing authority in Gaza, the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to govern, to establish the rule of law, to end corruption, and thereby to demonstrate that it is a partner for peace;

Whereas Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly called for the establishment of `One Authority, One Law, and One Gun`;

Whereas since the withdrawal of Israeli military forces, the Palestinian Authority has taken few steps to establish rule of law in Gaza;

Whereas Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, and other terrorist organizations have vowed to continue terrorism against Israeli civilians, seek the destruction of the State of Israel, and employ violence and terror in fulfillment of that aim;

Whereas the inclusion of Hamas, or any other terrorist group on the State Department list of foreign terrorist organizations, into the Palestinian structure could be construed as an implicit endorsement of their anti-American and anti-Israeli terrorist ideology;

Whereas the first provision of the Road Map to Middle East Peace calls for the Palestinians to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure;

Whereas these terrorist organizations, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, operate virtually without interference from the Palestinian Authority;

Whereas Hamas has announced its intention to run in Palestinian legislative elections scheduled for January 2006;

Whereas Abbas has indicated his willingness to see Hamas participate in the elections without first calling for it to disband its militia or for it to renounce its goal of destroying the State of Israel;

Whereas the United States has clearly stated that armed militias attached to political parties are incompatible with democratic societies;

Whereas President Bush has stated that Hamas `seeks to end dissent in every form, to control every aspect of life * * * the terrorists are preparing a future of oppression and misery`;

Whereas the forces of freedom must continue to keep an untiring vigil against the enemies of rising democracies; and

Whereas the United States has a longstanding policy of not dealing or negotiating with terrorists: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

- (1) reaffirms its commitment to the safety and security of the democratic State of Israel;
- (2) asserts that terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, should not be permitted to participate in Palestinian elections until such organizations recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, cease incitement, condemn terrorism, and permanently disarm and dismantle their terrorist infrastructure;
- (3) calls on the Palestinian Authority President Abbas before the election to declare openly his intention to take action to dismantle the terrorist organizations;
- (4) asserts that the inclusion of Hamas, or any other terrorist group on the Department of State's list of foreign terrorist organizations, in the Palestinian Authority's government will inevitably raise serious questions for the United States about the commitment of the Palestinian Authority and its leadership to making peace with Israel and will potentially undermine the ability of the United States to have a constructive relationship with, or provide further assistance to, the Palestinian Authority; and
- (5) states its strong belief that, as underlined in every recent Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, progress in the peace process requires sustained Palestinian effort to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, and that delay in confronting that principal obligation only emboldens the opponents of peace and threatens its realization.



**STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET ON THE PALESTINIAN
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, 28 DECEMBER 2005**

The Quartet welcomes the upcoming Palestinian Legislative Council elections as a positive step toward consolidation of Palestinian democracy and the goal of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Quartet calls on the Palestinian Authority and the Central Elections Commission to ensure a free, fair, and open process in accordance with Palestinian law. The Quartet noted the continued importance of security in this regard, and calls on the Palestinian Authority to take immediate steps to ensure

law and order, prevent terrorist attacks and dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism. The Palestinian Authority must also assure the security of polling stations and of Central Election Commission personnel, enforce existing law, regulations, and decrees, particularly those prohibiting the public display of weapons, external financing of campaigns, and the use of religious facilities for campaign purposes.

The Quartet recalled its September 20 statement, together with the Secretary General's subsequent statement on behalf of the Quartet that ultimately those who want to be part of the political process should not engage in armed group or militia activities, for there is a fundamental contradiction between such activities and the building of a democratic state. In this regard, the Quartet calls on all participants to renounce violence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and disarm. The Quartet is encouraged by the negotiation of a Code of Conduct governing participation in the legislative council election. It calls on all parties and candidates in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections to agree and fully adhere to this Code to ensure an environment conducive to free and fair elections and international observer support. The Quartet welcomed the Palestinian Authority's invitation to international election observers.

Furthermore, the Palestinian Authority should take additional steps to ensure the democratic process remains untainted by violence, by prohibiting political parties from pursuing their aims through violent means, and by moving expeditiously to codify this as Palestinian law. In particular, the Quartet expressed its view that a future Palestinian Authority Cabinet should include no member who has not committed to the principles of Israel's right to exist in peace and security and an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism.

The Quartet believes it is essential that direct dialogue begin immediately between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to coordinate preparations for the Legislative Council elections. Proactive measures are essential to the movement of voters, elections committee staff and materials, and international observers throughout the election process, as outlined in the Roadmap. Both parties should work to put in place a mechanism to allow Palestinians resident in Jerusalem to exercise their legitimate democratic rights, in conformity with existing precedent.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS ON SECURITY
AND THE PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS, WASHINGTON, DC, 11 JANUARY 2006**

I welcome yesterday's statement by Acting Prime Minister Olmert that he will recommend to the Israeli cabinet that the Government of Israel allow voting by Palestinians, including those in East Jerusalem, in accordance with existing precedent. I also welcome the statement on January 9 by President Abbas that Palestinian Legislative Council elections will be held on schedule and that PA security forces will take the necessary steps to ensure those elections take place in a safe and secure environment free of violence and intimidation.

Holding free and fair Palestinian Legislative Council elections on January 25 represents a key step in the process of building a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state. The Quartet has previously stated its view that armed groups have no place in the democratic process. It remains the view of the United States that there should be no place in the political process for groups or individuals who refuse to renounce terror and violence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and disarm.

Development of a Palestinian democracy based on tolerance and liberty is a key element of the Roadmap. To participate in a peace process of Israelis and Palestinians, the Palestinian partner must at least accept Israel's right to exist. To implement agreements on movement and access for the Palestinian territories, the Palestinian partner must be committed to preventing violence. In short, the Palestinian partner must be committed to peaceful development.

As President Abbas has said, democratic elections can be the prelude to laws and policies embracing peace, excluding the advocates of terror and violence and implementing Roadmap obligations to dismantle the infrastructure of terror.

I have discussed these issues with the Quartet and other foreign leaders. Like them, President Bush and I support and admire the steadfastness of the Israeli people at this difficult time. Let there be no mistaking our condemnation of those who spout hate, and our resolve to stand against those who threaten violence and support terror. The international community speaks with one voice in denouncing the recent statements of the Iranian President, who continues to isolate the Iranian people from the rest of the world through his hateful comments. We will not tolerate terror from anywhere, including from its sponsors in Syria and Iran.

We continue to pray for the recovery of Prime Minister Sharon. My thoughts and prayers are with him, his family, his colleagues in government, and the people of Israel. The United States stands with you at this difficult time, and we remain resolute in our friendship with the people of Israel and our commitment to the safety and security of our close ally and friend.



**ISRAELI CABINET, DECISION ON THE PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS,
JERUSALEM, 15 JANUARY 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

[...] 3. The Cabinet discussed procedures ahead of the upcoming Palestinian Authority (PA) legislative elections. Acting Prime Minister Olmert made the following remarks:

"Elections for the Palestinian Legislative council will be held on 25 January 2006. The Palestinians - in contravention of agreements - have decided to allow Hamas to participate in the elections for the first time. Israel has expressed its position that while, in the wake of Hamas's participation in the elections, it cannot cooperate with them, it will not prevent them. PA Chairman Abu Mazen promised the Americans and the international community that, after the elections, and following their results, he would be able to include the terrorist organizations in the Palestinian political structure and disband them. In recent weeks, due to internal problems in the PA and unrelated to Israel, the Palestinians have tried to postpone the elections and blame Israel, on the pretext that Israel is not allowing the elections to take place in eastern Jerusalem, as occurred in 1996 and 2005. According to the interim agreement, 5,000 people are allowed to vote in Jerusalem and in practice, approximately 1,200 did so in both 1996 and 2005.

The international community, led by the US, has expressed a determined position (see US Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice's remarks from last week) regarding the participation of terrorist organizations in the political system and has demanded that the PA act against them.

There are two alternatives: Not to allow the elections to be held in Jerusalem, which would lead to their postponement with Israel being blamed for all the repercussions. The second alternative is to hold the elections in Jerusalem, as was done previously, while taking strict care to remove all signs and symbols regarding Hamas, both before the elections and on election day. This is in order to deny the Palestinians an excuse to postpone the elections and evade their obligation to act against the terrorist organizations immediately after the elections."

The Cabinet decided as follows:

A. Elections (hereinafter "the elections") for the Palestinian Legislative Council are due to take place on 25 January 2006. The Government views with great importance the holding of elections in the PA; however, the participation in the elections of terrorist organizations, including Hamas, which calls for the destruction of Israel, fundamentally impairs the legitimacy of the elections and contravenes the interim agreement, as it also does accepted international criteria regarding the participation in elections of parties that support violence and terrorism. The international community ascribes great importance to these elections as a step which will lead to the disarming of the terrorist organizations. To this end, it has appealed to the State of Israel to support and assist, as much as

possible, in assuring that the PA elections are held. For the aforesaid reasons, Israel has announced that it will not prevent the elections from taking place but in light of the participation in the elections of Hamas and other terrorist organizations, Israel will not cooperate with them.

- B. The IDF and the security forces will take such steps as are necessary to enable the elections to be held. The arrangements will be coordinated by the authorized IDF and Israel Police commanders and will be operated in keeping with necessary security considerations, including (*inter alia*):
- i. Opening hours at the crossings will be expanded on Election Day itself, as per needs;
 - ii. Freedom of movement and passage will be allowed for those involved in the elections (candidates and activists except for those identified with terrorist organizations);
 - iii. Existing coordination mechanisms under the auspices of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, the Civil Administration and the Erez DCO will provide immediate responses to such problems as may arise regarding the transportation, distribution and setting up of elections equipment, as well as the movement of those involved in the elections (candidates, voters and observers).
 - iv. The presence, and freedom of movement, of international observers (and local observers not identified with terrorist organizations) will be allowed;
 - v. The movement of journalists (including between the PA areas) with permits for entry by foreign media personnel will be allowed.
- C. Pursuant to Article 3a of the 1994 Law Implementing the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area (Restriction on Activity) and Article 4 of the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Annex II - Protocol Concerning Elections), and in keeping with changes stemming from the increase in the Palestinian population:
- i. Election propaganda by persons identified with terrorist organizations will not be permitted within Jerusalem;
 - ii. Nothing in the foregoing shall detract from the rights of law enforcement and security authorities to arrest, detain, investigate, try and/or carry out any other necessary law enforcement or security activity regarding terrorist organization activists, including on election day;
 - iii. In those post office branches operated by the Postal Authority in order to provide services on Election Day, no signs or symbols of terrorist organizations shall be permitted;
 - iv. The Minister of Communications will instruct the Postal Authority regarding the implementation of the foregoing pursuant to his authority according to the 1996 Law Implementing the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Jurisdiction and Other Instructions).
- D. Nothing in this agreement shall, either directly or indirectly, impair the State of Israel's full and complete sovereignty over Jerusalem as its united capital, or constitute agreement or approval of the integrity of the elections or their being held pursuant to the Interim Agreement, the Roadmap or accepted democratic criteria.

The second Palestinian Legislative Council elections are due to be held on 25 January 2006 (the first were held on 20 January 1996). These elections are very important regarding the creation of a new PA administration, which is due to carry out the necessary reforms and uphold its commitments, according to the Roadmap as was approved by the Government, i.e. the elimination of terrorism and the disbanding of its infrastructures, the carrying out of comprehensive reforms and additional commitments that the PA took upon itself. The international community expects the State of Israel to assist in the proper holding of elections.

Due to the participation of Hamas, a terrorist organization that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel, Israel has announced that it will not cooperate with these elections and will not coordinate them on a political level with the PA. However, Israel will not prevent the elections from being held. As per the PA's commitments, both according to the Roadmap and those made in contacts it has held with international community representatives, the Palestinians have announced that immediately after the elections and as a result of them, they will act to disband the terrorist organizations and their infrastructures. Therefore, Israel ascribes great importance to the holding of the elections and to not furnishing the Palestinians with an excuse to shirk their commitments.

In order not to disturb the proper holding of elections in Judea and Samaria, the Government has authorized IDF and Israel Police commanders to deal with matters regarding the elections and to determine course of action vis-à-vis the PA security organizations as per security needs.

The format of the elections regarding voting by Palestinians in eastern Jerusalem will be as was determined in 1996, with such changes as mainly stem from restrictions on terrorist organization activity and population growth.

The Israel Police will consider propaganda activities that the Palestinian side requests to hold in Jerusalem. All events in public places will require a police permit. Special arrangements will be determined for the affixing of propaganda notices. As was done in the past, marches and rallies in streets and open areas will not be permitted in Jerusalem; large notices shall not be affixed to vehicles. The police will not allow propaganda and related activities by terrorist organizations.

As per the foregoing decision, Acting Prime Minister Olmert has issued the following instructions:

- The security establishment will prepare so as to enable the proper holding of elections in Judea and Samaria without any infringement or compromise on Israeli security; the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories shall continue to hold ongoing contacts with the Palestinian elections committee;
- The Israel Police will prepare so as to enable the holding of elections in five post office branches, while taking strict care that no sign or symbol of Hamas will be permitted in Jerusalem both in the context of elections propaganda and on Election Day;
- The Israel Police will cooperate with the Foreign Ministry and the Communications Ministry in holding the necessary contacts, on a technical level, with the Palestinian elections committee;
- The Foreign Ministry will render all necessary assistance to foreign observer missions so that Israel is not seen by them as causing the elections to fail;
- The Communications Ministry will prepare to operate five post office branches as was done in the past;
- The Municipality of Jerusalem will prepare in order to prevent any sign or symbol of Hamas in Jerusalem and to remove all elections propaganda in Jerusalem immediately after the elections. [...]



**EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND
EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER,
REMARKS TO THE PRESS PRIOR TO THE PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL ELECTIONS, 17 JANUARY 2006**

This is a critical moment for the Middle East. The elections due shortly in the Palestinian Territories and in Israel are landmark events.

- We hope these elections will bring two leaderships ready and able to inject new vigour into the Peace Process. The vast majority of Israelis and Palestinians are tired of conflict and insecurity.
- Neither the health of PM Sharon, nor the escalating violence in the Gaza strip, should distract leaders from the challenge of seeking peace.
- One of the reasons for my visit is to show Europe's support for Palestinian elections, in line with international standards. These elections are an important milestone on the road to democracy, and they should be held with no further delay.
- Effective, functioning, democratic Palestinian institutions are essential for the peace process. Without them we cannot lay the foundations for a viable Palestinian state living in peace with Israel. Improving democracy, accountability and efficiency in Palestinian governance is in everyone's interests.
- That is why, once again, the EU is operating the biggest Election Observation Mission at the forthcoming legislative elections with 237 observers. The EU Observation Mission, will help build confi-

- dence in the electoral process and I hope it will help to encourage Palestinians to go out and use their votes. Its leader, Veronique de Keyser, is doing a fantastic job in very difficult circumstances.
- And that is why we have done so much to support the preparation of these elections by the Central Electoral Commission – indeed these elections could not have taken place without us. During this trip I am announcing another €1.4 million to help the CEC with voter registration and polling activities. That brings our support to the electoral process to €8.5 million, including our observation missions now and at the Presidential elections.
 - Just as we are playing our part, we are counting on Israel to provide all due facilitation to the elections, including in East Jerusalem – in its own interests.
 - I was in Gaza, yesterday, to see for myself the important work we are doing, providing urgent assistance to make Palestinian's ordinary lives more bearable. We are improving the health system, building schools, repairing roads. I was able to inaugurate some public works programmes which have just been completed. And I am announcing the launch of four new energy and environment infrastructure projects in Gaza worth €20 million. We are working with all possible speed, though I cannot pretend the security situation is making our work any easier.
 - Revitalising the economy in Gaza is essential. What I have seen here only strengthens my conviction that this is key to further progress. I will continue to press this point in the Quartet and with Israel. It is crucial that we continue to improve free movement of people in and out of Gaza
 - We will not be able to step up travel in and out of Gaza without properly managed borders. I am announcing during this trip new assistance in support of Palestinian customs. This is the second phase of work we are doing to help the Palestinians build up secure and well managed borders. I am announcing a second payment of €1.5 million to provide x-ray machines, metal detectors, computers and other equipment. We will also be providing capacity building to fill gaps identified by the EU mission at Rafah.
 - Last night I met FM Nasser al-Kidwa because of President Abbas last minute travel to the funeral in Kuwait, and this morning I saw Acting Prime Minister Olmert.
 - I am making clear to both that the EU is contributing in very substantial ways, to creating the conditions for a two state solution. Like everyone else involved in this process we face some major challenges, but we are in it for the long haul. We have been a consistent, and reliable partner for both sides - and we will continue to offer our support to all those who seek peace by peaceful means.



ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER TZIPI LIVNI, STATEMENT UPON ASSUMING OFFICE, FOREIGN MINISTRY, JERUSALEM, 18 JANUARY 2006 [EXCERPTS]

Ostensibly I am receiving this portfolio for the transition period of a number of months until the elections, but as mentioned we cannot permit ourselves to view this period as one of transition or to rest until Israel's elections.

First of all, in the Middle East there is never a dull moment. Imagine to yourselves where we were a month or two months ago and where we'll be in another week or ten days. Beyond the elections in the State of Israel, this period is critical with regard to the question of our ability to reach some kind of an agreement with the Palestinians; to live with them in peace or to advance some kind of process, for in parallel to the election period in the State of Israel, in exactly one week elections will be held in the Palestinian Authority.

The truth is that the elections in the PA were supposed to be part of the process of democratization in the PA – but they are not. This is because there is no democracy in the world that permits terrorist organizations to participate in elections. The Europeans would not let this happen in Europe, for they learned the lesson of the 1930s, when the Nazis exploited democracy there. The Americans also did not let this happen elsewhere, wherever they passed other constitutions, such as in Afghanistan and Iraq.

There was a window of opportunity following the disengagement process that Israel created, and a choice should have been set before the Palestinians. We should have told them that this is the mean-

ing of democracy and you should choose it, not go to the polls with weapons, and not come armed to parliament, and not go armed to the government.

But the Palestinians came with a different claim to the international community and said that they need these elections in order to provide legitimacy in the war against the terrorist organizations.

So our objective now, even though the PA elections were supposed to complete the process of dismantling terrorism, and even though the situation has become one where the elections are part of the process that is supposed to lead, so they say, to the dismantling of terrorism – our commitment today is to make it clear at home, but particularly to the international community, that this process has not been resolved and the Palestinians have not been released from their commitment to dismantle the terrorist organizations. For this is the time, and our only chance to use this window of opportunity that we have created by the disengagement process, to use the Roadmap – which itself can be a move full of risks. But if we know how to use it wisely, and the Palestinians on their part know how to use it to advance their commitments and fulfill them, then we can lead both peoples to a better future. [...]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a central part in the defense of Israel. I know it sounds dramatic, but the State of Israel is fighting for its existence – in part this is a war for its physical existence, but part of this war is being fought in the diplomatic arena.

In the diplomatic arena, we all hear the statements coming out of Iran. These statements are unthinkable, and they are unthinkable to all, not only to minds that think in Hebrew.

We have in recent years witnessed an insidious process of the delegitimization of Israel as the state of the Jewish people. We have seen anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head – and this, my friends, is the concern not only of the State of Israel, not only of the Jewish people, but of all the nations of the world; for this first of all reflects on the society in which anti-Semitism dares to raise its head.

It is against all of this that we must fight, and the Foreign Ministry is the spearhead in this battle.



**EU COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER, SPEECH
ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,
STRASBOURG, 19 JANUARY 2006**

Honourable Members,

It is an honour to address you today on the Middle East Peace Process. It is particularly timely since I have just returned from a visit to Gaza, the West Bank and Israel earlier this week.

I had three objectives for my trip: (1) lend support to democracy building in the run-up to the Palestinian legislative elections; (2) underline the importance of EU financial support; (3) raise the visibility of a number of EU projects, notably in Gaza.

This is a critical moment for the Middle East. In both Israel and the Palestinian territories, there have been tremendous changes in the political landscape. I hope these elections will bring two leaderships ready and able to inject new vigour into the Peace Process.

I made it clear to both Israelis and Palestinians that the Commission will continue to offer our support to all those who seek peace by peaceful means. This means in particular, whatever the composition of the new Palestinian government, full respect of the principles in the Interim Association Agreement and Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan that we have agreed with the Palestinian Authority. These principles include respect of human rights and the rule of law and commitment to the Roadmap.

The Palestinian Authority has given the international community assurances that the elections will take place free from violence and intimidation and according to international standards. President Abbas has also made clear that acceptance of the Oslo accords and the Roadmap forms the basis for participation in the future government.

Acting Prime Minister Olmert assured me that Israel would facilitate the holding of these elections. His government took the difficult decision - in the context of an Israeli election campaign - to allow voting in East Jerusalem. We have welcomed that decision, and hope that this constructive spirit will also help to resolve any remaining logistical and practical aspect of the elections. Within the security constraints, it will also be important that Israel does all it can to allow free movement for voters and candidates in the Palestinian territories up to and including polling day.

The EU is supporting the Palestinian elections with the biggest Election Observation Mission - 240 observers, including 50 of your colleagues. I visited the Observation Team led by Véronique de Keyser, and was most impressed by her dedication and professionalism and that of her staff.

I was also impressed to meet the Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission, Hanna Nasir. Thanks to the sustained support of the EU, the CEC has established itself as one of the most credible and respected institutions in the Palestinian territories. During my visit, I announced another €1.4 million to help with voter registration and polling activities which brings our support to the electoral process to €18.5 million.

Honourable Members

One of the purposes of my visit to Gaza was to raise the profile of the important work we are doing, providing urgent assistance to make Palestinians' ordinary lives more bearable. We are improving the health system, building schools, and repairing roads. I inaugurated some public works programmes, and announced the launch of four new energy and environment infrastructure projects in Gaza worth €20 million. We are working with all possible speed, but the security situation is not making our work any easier.

Yet revitalising Gaza's economy is essential. What I saw only strengthened my conviction, and I will continue to press this point in the Quartet and with Israel. We must continue to improve free movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza. So I have relaunched the procurement process for a €25 million cargo terminal at the airport, to help facilitate Palestinian trade once the airport is reopened. Of course, we will only be able to go ahead with the project once we have the agreement of both sides.

Yet we will not be able to step up travel in and out of Gaza without properly managed borders. So we will provide a further €3 million package of support for the Rafah border mission as well as the further development of Palestinian customs.

I visited General Pistoletti and his team at the EU Border Assistance Mission, and was moved by what I saw: Europeans helping ordinary Palestinians to move across the frontier with Egypt for the first time in many years.

Honourable Members

I made clear to both my Israeli and Palestinian interlocutors that the EU is contributing substantially to creating the conditions for a two state solution. Like everyone involved, we face major challenges, but we are in it for the long haul. We have been a consistent and reliable partner for both sides.

But to make progress, both sides must move. Israel should take steps to implement the agreement brokered in November by Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn on improving movement and access – the port, the airport, the link between Gaza and West Bank and movement within the West Bank.

And the Palestinian Authority must take charge of law and order and public finances. It must take serious steps to relaunch its reform programme, and respect its commitments under the Interim Association Agreement and the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan.

At this critical juncture, our message is clear: the need for negotiations; ceasing all action threatening a two-state solution; the importance of imposing law and order; and fighting terrorism. Thank you.



**ACTING ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT,
ADDRESS TO THE 6TH HERZLIYA CONFERENCE, 24 JANUARY 2006**

Distinguished Guests,

Unfortunate circumstances have led to my appearance before you here this evening in place of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Two years ago, at this Conference, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon delivered his speech later known as the “Herzliya Speech”, the speech in which he announced the Disengagement Plan. From this place, one of our greatest commanders embarked on the most dramatic and significant, campaign of his life, the diplomatic, public and political campaign of the Disengagement Plan. That speech, and the Disengagement Plan which followed, are milestones in the history of the State of Israel.

I had the honor working beside Ariel Sharon throughout this bold political process. I accompanied him during the long months of internal conflict and confrontation. I witnessed how he withstood the supreme test faced by every leader: the temptation to preserve the status quo and not take the risks even if these could ensure a better future. Arik Sharon did not act in this manner. His policy always prioritized initiative over inaction, breakthrough over the monotonous route. He knew it was better for Israel to initiate political steps, and not be dragged into dangerous moves forced on it by others.

The State of Israel is still a young nation. There are many more steps we must take in order to build a ethical society with strong values: building a value-based education system, infusing our lives with Jewish content, strengthening our connection to the Jews of the Diaspora, shaping a system of equal opportunities with the Arab minority, based on rights and responsibilities, and developing a strong, just, compassionate and reactive economy. However, there is no doubt that the most important and dramatic step we face is the determination of permanent borders of the State of Israel, to ensure the Jewish majority in the country.

Zeev Jabotinsky defined the importance of a Jewish majority in his insightful and keen way: “The term ‘Jewish nation’ is absolutely clear: it means a Jewish majority. With this, Zionism began, and it is the basis of its existence, it will continue to work towards its fulfillment or it will be lost.”

The existence of a Jewish majority in the State of Israel cannot be maintained with the continued control over the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. We firmly stand by the historic right of the people of Israel to the entire Land of Israel. Every hill in Samaria and every valley in Judea is part of our historic homeland. We do not forget this, not even for one moment. However, the choice between the desire to allow every Jew to live anywhere in the Land of Israel to the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish country - obligates relinquishing parts of the Land of Israel. This is not a relinquishing of the Zionist idea, rather the essential realization of the Zionist goal - ensuring the existence of a Jewish and democratic state in the Land of Israel.

In order to ensure the existence of a Jewish national homeland, we will not be able to continue ruling over the territories in which the majority of the Palestinian population lives. We must create a clear boundary as soon as possible, one which will reflect the demographic reality on the ground. Israel will maintain control over the security zones, the Jewish settlement blocs, and those places which have supreme national importance to the Jewish people, first and foremost a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. There can be no Jewish state without the capital of Jerusalem at its center.

This is the path Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced several years ago. We - who were his partners in its formation - worked with him in order to establish a new public movement, which will determine our path in the coming years, and which will propel Israel forward.

The existence of two nations, one Jewish and one Palestinian, is the full solution to all the national aspirations and problems of each of the peoples, including the issue of refugees who will be absorbed

solely in a Palestinian state. We will not allow the entry of Palestinian refugees into the State of Israel. This is our clear stance, which is backed by the unequivocal American position expressed in the United States President's letter of April 2004, to the Prime Minister. The only way to achieve this goal is the full implementation of the Roadmap, and of President Bush's vision of June 2002.

The Roadmap is based on a simple and just idea: if the Palestinians abandon the path of terror, and stop their war against the citizens of Israel, they can receive national independence in a Palestinian state with temporary borders, even before all the complicated issues connected to a final agreement are resolved. All these issues will be resolved later during negotiations between the two countries, in the accepted manner in which countries resolve their differences.

On the eve of elections in the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, I say here, on behalf of the Government of Israel, that we will uphold all the obligations we have taken upon ourselves in the framework of the Roadmap, and we demand that the leadership in Ramallah do likewise.

Israel has already proven, including through the Disengagement, that it is prepared to advance peace. It will continue to act so in relation to the commitments it has taken upon itself, in exchange for Palestinian commitments. This includes: limiting construction in the settlements, improving the quality of life of the Palestinian population, and dismantling unauthorized outposts.

The Government of Israel will not be deterred by the threats of a minority of lawbreakers. The unauthorized outposts will be dismantled, and I have already given the appropriate instructions in this regard to our security forces and those entrusted with upholding the law. We will forcefully defend the values of the rule of law, even when attacked from within.

We have begun fulfilling our commitments, which are not easy to implement given the internal disagreements in our country, and the disengagement from the land of our ancestors. Loyal to the path of Sharon, we prefer the wisdom of compromise to emotion, and we demand that the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority and his government act similarly.

The Palestinians, headed by Chairman Mahmoud Abbas have committed themselves to implementing a series of concrete steps, which will abrogate the capability to threaten Israel and the political process with terror. Among them is the dismantling of all terror organizations starting with the Hamas, confiscating illegal weapons, enforcing law and order in their territory, implementing government, security and financial reforms, and ceasing the incitement and education of hatred against Israel.

The key to moving the political process forward is for the Palestinians to abandon the path of terror. This is not a matter for words, statements and empty promises - we had our fill of these in the past.

The Roadmap determines that, only after all these steps are fully completed, will they be entitled to the status of national independence and equal rights and obligations in the international community. This is not solely an Israeli demand. This is a general international prerequisite required of them. Led by the United States, the countries of the European Union, Russia, the UN and the moderate Arab states, led by Egypt and Jordan.

The Government of Israel, under my leadership, will insist on the full implementation of the Roadmap, and of all its phases, exactly as was agreed, because this is the only way to preserve security and bring about peace. It would be a serious, historic mistake to allow the Palestinians to avoid the fulfillment of their commitment to dismantle terror organizations. We must adhere to the Roadmap, conduct negotiations on its implementation, and act to create massive international pressure on the Palestinians to fight terror.

Those who are in a rush have asked whether, because of the elections, the present Government has already committed to another disengagement if future contacts with the Palestinians are not successful. We would prefer an agreement. If our expected partners in the negotiations in the framework of the Roadmap do not uphold their commitments, we will preserve the Israeli interest in every way.

The elections taking place tomorrow in the Palestinian Authority are an historic opportunity for the Palestinians to take a giant step towards realizing their goal - to achieve national independence in a country of their own.

In 1947, the Palestinians rejected the offer to establish a country. History has provided them with another opportunity to establish an independent state. The actualization of this opportunity involves relinquishing some of their national dreams, just as we have relinquished some of our national dreams.

In the elections tomorrow, and in the steps which will follow, they will have to decide: whether to take their fate into their hands or to again leave the key in the hands of the extremists, those who led them from bad to worse and condemned them to a life of misery and suffering.

It is important to be clear: we are interested in neighborly relations which are good, productive and progressive. We support the establishment of a modern, democratic Palestinian state which respects civil rights, and is economically prosperous. Their welfare is our welfare, their well-being is our well-being, their stability is our stability.

I am following the Palestinian elections closely. We have made important decisions whose purpose is to allow the existence of free and orderly elections. I hope that the results will allow the elected government under the leadership of Mahmoud Abbas to move forward towards a settlement.

I am not a partner to all the doomsayers who are already telling us how hard and horrible it will be here after the elections in the Authority. Israel will know how to operate and act in any circumstance, faced with any scenario, in order to preserve its security and political horizons, and advance the hopes for a changed reality.

Backed by broad international support, Israel will continue to demand that all the phases of the Roadmap be carried out. If the Palestinians continue to evade their commitments, we have the ability to defend Israel and strike back at terror and those who carry it out, as we have until today, and even with more intensity.

The difficult war against terror has not stopped, and will not stop as long as there is a threat to the security of the citizens of Israel. Acceleration of the construction of the security fence, together with the improved ability of the IDF and other security forces, as well as Israel's increased latitude - will be our answer to terror.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Alongside our significant effort to realize our dream of tranquility, peace and security, we cannot ignore what is occurring within us, the quality of life within our home - our commitment to building a strong, value-based society is complete and unequivocal.

For several years, the State of Israel suffered a severe economic recession, which threatened its social stability. We began taking significant steps to pull out of the recession. The Government steps jump-started economic growth. We achieved a growth rate of 5.2% in 2005, higher than that which exists in Europe and the United States. We stabilized employment and lowered the unemployment rate from 11% to approximately 9%. We encouraged foreign investors to invest unprecedented sums in Israeli industry and the Israeli financial system. The amount of direct foreign investment in the Israeli economy reached more than \$6 billion in 2005. All the economic indicators point to a strong Israeli economy, which serves as an attractive target for foreign investors. These steps were taken by the Government, headed by Ariel Sharon, with his full and unprecedented backing, and under the leadership of then-Minister of Finance Benjamin Netanyahu.

Nevertheless, we have still not done enough to narrow the gaps in society. We have not done enough to defend those sectors of the public which are in dire need. We have not shown enough compassion towards those who have nothing. Since I took upon myself the responsibility of shaping the State of Israel's economic and social policy, we have decided to change our emphasis, and determine a new set of priorities.

Achieving this goal will not be realized through a return to the regime of distributing allowances and support, rather by determining clear goals in the two central spheres of modern society: education and employment. We must allow equal opportunities for every citizen of Israel, and achieve equality in the possibility to realize these opportunities. Every Israeli citizen deserves the best education, and a supportive and stimulating environment in which to earn an honorable living. Combining these two components is the key to growth and narrowing the social gaps.

Before his hospitalization, the Prime Minister directed that work plans be prepared, which would include clear goals and detailed paths of action in those spheres. These plans will be presented to the public shortly, and will constitute the core building blocks of the Government's policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to end on a personal note. For 32 years, I have served the State of Israel. From the position I have assumed due to Prime Minister Sharon's illness, I see an Israel fighting difficulties and great hardships, but I also see the glimmer of hope in the eyes of many Israelis, for the first time in many years. And as Ariel Sharon said: "We must not let this new spirit, which grants our peoples hope, pass us by and leave us empty-handed - I have no intention of missing this opportunity."

From here, from this podium, I declare: I believe in the people of Israel and in the State of Israel. I believe in the genuine will of the citizens of Israel to live in peace, security and tranquility, and I believe in our ability to achieve this goal when we are united. From here, I send my wishes for a speedy recovery to the man who, over the past five years, has led us into a reality in which there is a chance for a better future. I hope that we will soon be able to stand before him and tell him: we have walked in your light. -Thank you.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT
OF THE RESULTS OF THE 2ND PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
ELECTIONS, RAMALLAH, 26 JANUARY 2006**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our Palestinian people in the homeland and in the Diaspora, I address you today after I received the official results of the elections of our Legislative Council which were held with integrity and transparency.

I congratulate our people on this great democratic accomplishment which is considered a leading model that gained the respect of the whole world. I will conduct immediately the necessary consultations to start the formation of the new Palestinian government after the new PLC is sworn in.

I have to be honest with you and say that the next government has grave tasks and burdens; there are Palestinian-Israeli agreements starting with the Oslo Accords and the Arab Summits resolutions and ending with the resolutions that have been agreed upon by the international community, in particular the roadmap as the sole framework that is being posed now for implementation, and this is a plan that includes the vision of US President Bush on establishing two states living side by side and that the Israeli occupation that took place in 1967 must end and to solve the refugees issue according to Resolution 194 and the Arab Initiative in Beirut Summit.

All of this constitutes political principles and grounds upon which I was elected as President of the PNA and these represent core elements in the program of the PLO which I was entrusted to head.

The main goal of my people and authority and the government is to end the occupation and to establish the independent Palestinian state with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital and the next government has to work with perseverance to gain the confidence of the international community and the international public opinion in order to confront the settlements activities in all their forms and the Apartheid wall and to release our heroic prisoners and establish our independent Palestinian state with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In the same determination that I showed to hold the elections all over the homeland, including al-Quds al-Sharif, I am committed to implement the program upon which you elected me and this is a program understood by the whole world and it is a program based on the negotiations and a peaceful solution of the conflict with Israel. It is a program that clings to the national constants with regards to the independent sovereign state with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital and which can guarantee the rights of our refugees; a program that seeks the unity of the Palestinian people within the context of the PLO which is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and we will work God Willing to activate the role of the PLO and develop its role inside and outside since it is the higher reference that protects the national program and the declaration of the Palestinian independence and the resolutions of the PNC terms and all agreements and documents that we signed and committed to. Together God willing we will proceed to realize the dream for which dozens of thousands of martyrs sacrificed their lives for which is a free and independent Palestinian state; a democratic and prosperous state on the basis of clinging to our national unity and democracy and political pluralism and equality among all citizens and guarantee the personal freedoms and equality between man and woman as stressed in the Declaration of Independence. Peace be upon you.



**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER'S BUREAU, STATEMENT ON THE PALESTINIAN
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, JERUSALEM, 26 JANUARY 2006**

Today, it became known that the PA elections have resulted in a victory for Hamas. There is no doubt that - from Israel's point-of-view - a new situation has been created.

In the Roadmap, the PA committed itself to dismantling all of the terrorist organizations operating in its area. Israel has upheld the Roadmap and has demanded - and continues to demand - that PA Chairman Abu Mazen implement the obligation to dismantle the terrorist organizations and their infrastructures.

Approximately one year ago, the PA decided to hold elections for its Legislative Council and to enable the main terrorist organization - Hamas - to take part in these elections. At the same time, the PA and its Chairman made a commitment - both to us and to the international community - that a condition for Hamas's participation in these elections was that upon their conclusion the PA would work to disarm Hamas and turn it from a terrorist organization into a political organization, in accordance with its requirements under the Roadmap.

The international community agreed to reverse the order and allow the PA to hold the elections before the dismantling of the terrorist organizations. We demand that the PA and its Chairman honor this commitment in the shortest timeframe and both disarm Hamas and the other terrorist organizations and dismantle their other abilities to perpetrate acts of terrorism.

The State of Israel will not negotiate with a Palestinian administration if its members include an armed terrorist organization that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel; in any case, Israel will continue to fight terrorism with a heavy hand, everywhere.

Hamas has been declared to be a terrorist organization by most of the international community. The international community will not accept a situation in which a terrorist organization takes part in an administration that seeks to enjoy international legitimacy.

Acting Prime Minister Olmert and Foreign Minister Livni will be in contact with international leaders ahead of the upcoming Quartet meeting and the upcoming meeting of European Union foreign ministers, which are due to take place next week. Israel will demand that the entire international community compel the PA and its Chairman to implement the commitment to eliminate Hamas as a terrorist organization that calls for Israel's destruction.



**STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET ON THE PALESTINIAN
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, WASHINGTON, DC, 26 JANUARY 2006**

The Quartet consulted today on the Palestinian Legislative Council elections. It congratulates President Abbas and the Palestinian people on an electoral process that was free, fair and secure. The Quartet calls on all parties to respect the results of the election and the outcome of the Palestinian constitutional process so that it may unfold in an atmosphere of calm and security.

The Palestinian people have voted for change, but it is the view of the Quartet that their aspirations for peace and statehood, as articulated by President Abbas in his statement following the closing of polls yesterday, remain unchanged. The Quartet reiterates its view that there is a fundamental contradiction between armed group and militia activities and the building of a democratic state. A two-state solution to the conflict requires all participants in the democratic process to renounce violence and terror, accept Israel's right to exist, and disarm, as outlined in the Roadmap.



**EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY, STATEMENT ON THE PALESTINIAN
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, BRUSSELS, 26 JANUARY 2006**

The European Union welcomes the successful holding on 25 January of elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The Palestinian people have demonstrated a clear commitment to determine their political future via democratic means. These elections saw impressive voter participation in an open and fairly-contested electoral process that was efficiently administered by the independent Palestinian Central Elections Commission.

The successful holding of these elections is an important step in strengthening Palestinian democracy and implementing Palestinian Roadmap obligations.

The European Union appreciates measures taken by Israel to facilitate the holding of the PLC elections, including in East Jerusalem.

The European Union stands ready to continue to support Palestinian economic development and democratic state building. At the same time, the European Union expects the newly elected PLC to support the formation of a government committed to ending violence, a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the rule of law, reform, and sound fiscal management. The European Union welcomes President Abbas' commitment and leadership in this regard. The European Union reiterates its position that there is no place in a political process for groups or individuals who advocate violence. The European Union urges all factions to disarm, renounce violence, and recognize Israel's right to exist.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS ON THE
PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, WORLD ECONOMIC
FORUM, DAVOS, 26 JANUARY 2006**

[Rice made her remarks via Digital Videoconference]

Well, thank you very much. Thank you for the very probing question and I want to thank the members of this distinguished panel. There are old friends on this panel, people for whom I - I've known for years. I want to thank Klaus Schwab for making this opportunity available.

And I would like very much to turn to the question just asked, but if you will permit me, I would like to start with a statement on something that I think is very much on all of our minds this morning be-

cause I'm certain that people will have seen the preliminary results of the Palestinian elections. We're going to be talking about democracy in this session and I'd like to begin by making a statement on those elections before turning to the question asked of me.

While we await the confirmation of those final results from the Palestinian elections, we've seen the predictions regarding the Palestinian Legislative Council elections. We offer our congratulations to President Abbas and the Palestinian people on an election process that was peaceful and free of violence and, by all accounts, fair and where there was very heavy turnout of the Palestinian population.

The Palestinian people have apparently voted for change, but we believe that their aspirations for peace and a peaceful life remain unchanged. Those aspirations can only be met through a two-state solution, which requires a renunciation of violence and turning away from terrorism and accepting the right of Israel to exist and the disarmament of militias. As we have said, you cannot have one foot in politics and the other in terror. Our position on Hamas has therefore not changed.

I have spoken to President Abbas today, who was elected by the Palestinian people on a platform of peace. The Palestinians have a constitutional process that they will now follow and we ask all parties to respect this process so that it can unfold in an atmosphere of calm and security.

I've also spoken to Secretary General Annan, to Foreign Minister Livni of Israel and to others to share views on the way forward. There will soon be a meeting of the Quartet that is devoted to the roadmap and to Middle East peace.

Thank you for allowing me to make that statement.



ISRAELI CABINET COMMUNIQUÉ, "PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS IS STILL KEY ELEMENT IN PNA," JERUSALEM, 29 JANUARY 2006

At the weekly cabinet meeting today (Sunday, 29 Jan. 2006):

2. OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Amos Yedlin, Isa Director Yuval Diskin, IDF Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni briefed ministers on the results of the recent Palestinian Authority (PA) elections. They discussed the current state of relations between Fatah and Hamas, and within Fatah, given the results of the elections.

Defense Minister Mofaz stressed that Hamas's sweeping victory has created a new and complex reality in the PA with the potential for additional developments both within Fatah and Hamas, and in general Palestinian affairs - a reality which compels Israel to face several challenges that call for caution and sagacity in the coming period as well as determination, awareness, and a readiness to cope with a possible escalation.

It was pointed out that, even though Hamas won the largest number of votes, PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) is still a key element in the PA, and his decisions regarding Hamas and the Palestinian security services and constitution will greatly influence the nature of Palestinian affairs. It seems that Hamas needs time to make decisions and prepare to deal with the election results, which means that it will be responsible for governing. Hamas has taken care to show national responsibility since the election results were published and it has called on Fatah to cooperate and join a coalition government.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni made it clear that the international community recognizes the legitimacy of the elections, as part of the democratic process in which the Palestinians expressed their views. This fact makes it difficult for leaders to unequivocally criticize the results; however, the need to both recognize Israel's right to exist and to abandon the path of violence and terrorism is being emphasized. In most

statements, world leaders are ruling out the possibility of Hamas participating in the diplomatic process under current conditions, i.e. without amending its covenant (<http://tinyurl.com/9pjjj>) or changing its leadership. The foreign minister said that the PA elections will be discussed tomorrow by the Quartet and by the European Union (EU), as well as during German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Israel and the PA. Within Hamas, there is increasing tension on issues related to accepting government responsibility such as the agreements with Israel, honoring international agreements, the continuation of external financial assistance, the continuation of terrorism, and the various demands and conditions being set by international elements.

Foreign Minister Livni detailed reactions in the Arab world to Hamas's victory. Arab League Secy.-Gen. Amr Mousa said that Hamas would have to accept the Beirut initiative, which includes full recognition of Israel. Fatah is licking its wounds and is establishing bodies to learn the lessons of its defeat; the Fatah Central Committee decided not to join a unity government with Hamas. There have been calls for Abu Mazen's resignation.

Livni discussed reactions in the international community and referred to the Quartet statement (<http://tinyurl.com/cffkt>). She emphasized that she made it clear to her European colleagues that there must be a separation between the need to support democratic elections and the results of those elections.

Livni discussed the US reaction to the elections, as seen in remarks by US President George Bush and US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, and those of the EU.

Acting Prime Minister Olmert said: "As soon as the results of the PA elections became known, I consulted with various elements in order to analyze the new situation that has been created. Following these consultations, we announced (<http://tinyurl.com/85br8>) that the State of Israel will not negotiate with any Palestinian administration even part of which is composed of an armed terrorist organization that calls for the destruction of the state of Israel. This position has won admiration in both Israel and around the world and to the best of our knowledge, it has also met with the widespread agreement and understanding of almost all international elements. At the same time, we announced that Israel would continue to act against terrorism everywhere, at anytime; there is no intention to compromise on these matters.

"I must point out that in these consultations there was reference to our intelligence assessments regarding the results of the elections, whether there were gaps between the assessments and the reality. I must point out that at no stage, in any form, was anybody in the intelligence community reprimanded. This is baseless. I, and the entire government, have unreserved confidence in the military establishment, in the military leadership, in Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Halutz and in the IDF Intelligence Branch for its outstanding work; in the ISA, for its outstanding work, the benefits of which we enjoy every day. It is fitting to say this and I ask that this matter not be dealt with so as not to afford anyone an opportunity to analyze what did not happen.

"We decided that Foreign Minister Livni would be in contact with the international community ahead of this week's Quartet and EU foreign ministers meetings in order to deliver Israel's messages and form a unified diplomatic front. Over the weekend, I spoke with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (<http://tinyurl.com/dqc62>), Jordanian King Abdullah II (<http://tinyurl.com/8ynfc>), UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, French President Jacques Chirac (<http://tinyurl.com/8njkl>), and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (<http://tinyurl.com/aybv6>) and I said that Israel would not have any dialogue with Hamas or the PA before it and its chairman meet the following terms: The disarming of the terrorist organizations and the renunciation of the path of terrorism, recognition of the existence of the State of Israel, cancellation of the Hamas Covenant (<http://tinyurl.com/9pjjj>) that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel, and recognition of all of the agreements and understandings that have been signed and entered into between Israel and the PA.

"The positions of the leaders with whom we spoke and our position were identical. They said that, for their part, they would continue not to have any contacts with Hamas in its current format, or with the PA headed by Abu Mazen, without the fulfillment of these terms. We will continue to the diplomatic

campaign to broaden the understandings with the international community. This evening, I will meet with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and I will discuss this issue with her."

Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert issued the following statement:

- "A. The State of Israel upholds the Roadmap and continues to demand that PA Chairman Abu Mazen carry out the commitment to dismantle all terrorist organizations and their infrastructures.
- B. The State of Israel will not conduct any negotiations with any Palestinian administration even part of which is composed of an armed terrorist organization that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel.
- C. Israel will continue to act against the terrorist organizations wherever necessary.
- D. The State of Israel will work with the international community so that no dialogue is conducted with Hamas or with the PA before it and its chairman fulfill the following terms:
 - i) The terrorist organizations are disarmed and the path of terrorism is abandoned;
 - ii) The existence of the State of Israel is recognized and the Hamas Covenant, which calls for Israel's destruction, is annulled;
 - iii) All agreements and understandings that were signed and entered into between Israel and the PA are recognized.
- E. In the coming days, I will consult regarding the various issues on the agenda with the Palestinians following the results of the elections, such as financial transfers, passage of Palestinian MPs between Gaza and Judea and Samaria, etc. After consulting with all of the relevant bodies, we will formulate decisions and act accordingly."



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, LONDON, 30 JANUARY 2006

Representatives of the Quartet - United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in London to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

The Quartet congratulated the Palestinian people on an electoral process that was free, fair and secure. The Quartet believes that the Palestinian people have the right to expect that a new Government will address their aspirations for peace and Statehood, and it welcomed President Abbas' affirmation that the Palestinian Authority is committed to the Road Map, previous agreements and obligations between the parties, and a negotiated two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is the view of the Quartet that all members of a future Palestinian Government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map. We urge both parties to respect their existing agreements, including on movement and access.

The Quartet received updates from Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn and United States Security Coordinator Lieutenant General Keith Dayton at today's meeting. We also had the good fortune of hearing from former President Carter, who helped supervise elections a few days ago. The Quartet called on the Palestinian Authority to ensure law and order, prevent terrorist attacks and dismantle the infrastructure of terror. The Quartet acknowledged the positive role of the Palestinian Authority security forces in helping maintain order during the recent elections. It expressed its view that progress on further consolidation, accountability and reform remains an important task.

Mindful of the needs of the Palestinian people, the Quartet discussed the issue of assistance to the Palestinian Authority. First, the Quartet expressed its concern over the fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority, and urged measures to facilitate the work of the caretaker Government to stabilize public finances, taking into consideration established fiscal accountability and reform benchmarks. Sec-

ond, the Quartet concluded that it was inevitable that future assistance to any new Government would be reviewed by donors against that Government's commitment to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map. The Quartet calls upon the newly elected Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to support the formation of a Government committed to these principles, as well as the rule of law, tolerance, reform and sound fiscal management.

Both parties are reminded of their obligations under the Road Map to avoid unilateral actions, which prejudice final status issues. The Quartet reiterated its view that settlement expansion must stop, reiterated its concern regarding the route of the barrier, and noted Acting Prime Minister Olmert's recent statements that Israel will continue the process of removing unauthorized outposts.

The Quartet expressed its concern for the health of Prime Minister Sharon and its hope for his rapid recovery.

Finally, the Quartet reiterated its commitment to the principles outlined in the Road Map and previous statements, and reaffirmed its commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, based upon United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. The Quartet will remain seized of the matter and will engage key regional actors.



**EUROPEAN UNION, COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2706TH EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING,
BRUSSELS, 30 JANUARY 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

The Council welcomed the holding on 25 January of elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and congratulated President Abbas and the Palestinian people on an electoral process that was free and fair. The Council fully endorsed the statement made by the Quartet issued on 26 January.

The Council stressed the need for the continuous commitment of all parties to the Palestinian constitutional process and emphasized the central role of President Mahmoud Abbas in ensuring stability in this transitional period. It reiterated its full support for President Abbas' determination to pursue a peaceful solution of the conflict with Israel.

The Council underlined that violence and terror are incompatible with democratic processes and urged Hamas and all other factions to renounce violence, to recognise Israel's right to exist, and to disarm.

The Council expects the newly elected PLC to support the formation of a government committed to a peaceful and negotiated solution of the conflict with Israel based on existing agreements and the Road-map as well as to the rule of law, reform and sound fiscal management. On this basis the European Union stands ready to continue to support Palestinian economic development and democratic state building.



**US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE TO THE
PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY ACT OF 2006, HR 4668 IH, 109TH CONGRESS,
2ND SESSION, WASHINGTON, DC, 31 JANUARY 2006**

To limit assistance to the Palestinian Authority unless the President certifies to Congress that the Palestinian Authority is not controlled by a foreign terrorist organization, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 31, 2006

Mr. FOSSELLA (for himself, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. NORWOOD, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. OTTER, Mr. KLINE, and Mr. JONES of North Carolina) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

A BILL

To limit assistance to the Palestinian Authority unless the President certifies to Congress that the Palestinian Authority is not controlled by a foreign terrorist organization, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Limitation on Assistance to the Palestinian Authority Act of 2006'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) In fiscal year 2005, the United States provided \$275 million to the West Bank and Gaza, of which \$50 million was provided directly to the Palestinian Authority.
- (2) On January 25, 2006, the militant group Hamas, an organization designated by the Department of State as a foreign terrorist organization, won parliamentary elections and control of the Palestinian government.
- (3) The inclusion of Hamas or any other foreign terrorist organization in a Palestinian government is an implicit endorsement of anti-American and anti-Israeli terrorist ideology.
- (4) On December 16, 2005, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed House Resolution 575, which asserts that 'terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, should not be permitted to participate in Palestinian elections until such organizations recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, cease incitement, condemn terrorism, and permanently disarm and dismantle their terrorist infrastructure'.
- (5) House Resolution 575 further asserts that 'the inclusion of Hamas, or any other terrorist group on the Department of State's list of foreign terrorist organizations, in the Palestinian Authority's government will inevitably raise serious questions for the United States about the commitment of the Palestinian Authority and its leadership to making peace with Israel and will potentially undermine the ability of the United States to have a constructive relationship with, or provide further assistance to, the Palestinian Authority'.
- (6) Hamas is a terrorist organization that has killed more than 500 people since 1989, including more than two dozen United States citizens.
- (7) The United States has clearly stated that armed militias attached to political parties are incompatible with democratic societies.

SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to promote the emergence of a democratic Palestinian government that -

- (1) denounces and combats terrorism;
- (2) is actively working to disarm and dismantle terrorist agencies, networks, and facilities;
- (3) is actively working to eliminate terrorist incitement and the commemoration of terrorists in Palestinian society;
- (4) respects the boundaries and sovereignty of its neighbors;
- (5) recognizes the existence of Israel and its right to secure borders; and
- (6) acknowledges, respects, and upholds the human rights of all people.

SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY.

Chapter 1 of part III of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2351 et seq.) is amended -

(1) by re-designating the second section 620G (as added by section 149 of Public Law 104-164 (110 Stat. 1436)) as section 620J; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new section:

SEC. 620K. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY.

(a) Limitation- Assistance may be provided under this Act or any other provision of law to the Palestinian Authority only during a period for which a certification described in subsection (b) is in effect.

(b) Certification- A certification described in this subsection is a certification transmitted by the President to Congress that contains a determination of the President that -

(1) the Palestinian Authority is not controlled by a foreign terrorist organization; and

(2) the Palestinian Authority--

(A) recognizes the right of Israel to exist;

(B) disarms all militias;

(C) renounces violence and acts of terrorism against Israel; and

(D) takes definitive steps to be an active and willing participant in peace negotiations and removes people with ties to terrorist organizations from its security services.

(c) Recertifications- Not later than 90 days after the date on which the President transmits to Congress an initial certification under subsection (b), and every 6 months thereafter -

(1) the President shall transmit to Congress a recertification that the requirements contained in subsection (b) are continuing to be met; or

(2) if the President is unable to make such a recertification, the President shall transmit to Congress a report that contains the reasons therefore.

(d) Congressional Notification- Assistance made available under this Act or any other provision of law to the Palestinian Authority may not be provided until 15 days after the date on which the President has provided notice thereof to the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate in accordance with the procedures applicable to reprogramming notifications under section 634A(a) of this Act.

(e) Definitions- In this section:

(1) FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION- The term 'foreign terrorist organization' means an organization designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 219(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189(a)).

(2) PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY- The term 'Palestinian Authority' includes any agency or instrumentality of the Palestinian Authority.'



**US SENATE, PALESTINIAN COMPLIANCE ACT OF 2006, 109TH CONGRESS,
2ND SESSION, S.2237, WASHINGTON, DC, 1 FEBRUARY 2006**

To withhold United States assistance from the Palestinian Authority until certain conditions have been satisfied.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

February 1, 2006

Mr. SANTORUM (for himself, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. KYL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To withhold United States assistance from the Palestinian Authority until certain conditions have been satisfied.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the `Palestinian Compliance Act of 2006'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) Harakatu I-Mujawamati I-Islamiya, which translated in English means the `Islamic Resistance Movement', was founded in Gaza by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin.
- (2) The Islamic Resistance Movement, also known as ` Hamas' has been designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Secretary of State.
- (3) The Hamas resistance movement, which evolved from the Muslim Brotherhood in 1987, won 74 seats of the 132-seat legislature in the January 26, 2006, Palestinian parliamentary elections.



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, RESOLUTION ON THE RESULT OF THE PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS AND THE SITUATION IN EAST JERUSALEM, 2 FEBRUARY 2006

[Results of the elections in Palestine and situation in the Middle East, and the Council's decision not to publish the report on East Jerusalem.]

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle-East and in particular that of 27 January 2005,
 - having regard to the results of the Palestinian legislative elections of 25 January 2006,
 - having regard to the statement of the European Union Election Observation Mission and the statement of the Parliament's observers' delegation,
 - having regard to the statement of the Middle East Quartet (comprising the United Nations, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the European Union) issued on 30 January 2006,
 - having regard to the Council's conclusions on the Middle East peace process of 30 January 2006,
 - having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Palestinian legislative elections were held in a very satisfactory manner, with a large turnout and respect for the rules provided for by the Palestinian electoral law, and under the aegis of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission (CEC),
 - B. whereas there was full commitment from the international community, the Quartet and the European Union to hold the elections,
 - C. whereas these elections, according to the European Union Election Observation Mission, 'marked another important milestone in the building of democratic institutions' under the efficient, professional and independent administration of the CEC,
 - D. whereas the conduct of the elections has provided a model for the region and has clearly demonstrated the commitment of the Palestinian people to democracy,
 - E. whereas support from the EU and other international donors is essential to satisfy the basic needs of the Palestinian people,
 - F. whereas it is important to strongly encourage all parties concerned by the post-election situation to refrain from any action that could lead to increasing tension,
 - G. whereas the Council decided not to publish the report on East Jerusalem drafted by the EU Heads of Mission in Jerusalem and Ramallah,

1. Welcomes the smooth and peaceful running of the election process and notably the high turnout of voters; considers that this high level of participation in the elections is proof of the will of the Palestinian people to shape their own future by democratic means;
2. Considers that the electoral campaign and the election day operations respected international standards and welcomes the monitoring work of the European Union Election Observation Mission;
3. Respects the results of the elections and takes note of the commitment of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, to act to form a new government which respects international rules and rejects violence; calls on the new Palestinian Legislative Council and the future government to clearly recognise the state of Israel's right to exist, to renounce all forms of terrorism, to commit themselves to the principle of peaceful negotiation aiming at a two-state solution and to work in cooperation with the Quartet;
4. Calls on the new Palestinian Parliament and future government and the Israeli Parliament and government to assume their responsibilities in this situation;
5. Asks for a strong and urgent initiative by the Quartet in order to promote a dialogue and negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis; considers that the 'Roadmap for Peace' remains a constructive base, but stresses the need to achieve positive and concrete results;
6. Points out that the results of the elections, which have provoked a profound change and radicalisation of the political arena in Palestine, are primarily an expression of the Palestinian people's desire for thorough reform, and also are a consequence of their difficult living conditions under occupation and strongly reflect criticism and grievances against the past administration;
7. Considers that, in order to prevent further radicalisation, the international community should focus on the many unsolved issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
8. Reaffirms that its commitment to remain the biggest aid donor to the Palestinian Authority and to continue assisting Palestinian economic development and Palestine's democratic process will be dependent on the new government's clarification on denouncing violence and recognising Israel; reaffirms also its determination to work for peace and to cooperate with any government which is ready to work by peaceful means;
9. Expresses its support to the present ESDP mission in Gaza to implement the Agreement on Movement and Accession, signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the aim of which is to secure and manage in an orderly fashion the border with Egypt, and decides closely to monitor this border mission;
10. Notes the conclusions of the report on East Jerusalem drafted by the EU Heads of Mission in Jerusalem and Ramallah, which describes the situation in East Jerusalem, in particular the consequences of the building of the wall, and brings forward concrete recommendations for confronting the present problems; regrets that Parliament was not informed about its content;
11. Reaffirms that the dispute over East Jerusalem is part of the conflict as a whole and remains an issue for negotiations, especially as between the two sides; calls for a stop to the discriminatory treatment of Palestinian residents and for the re-opening of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the President of the Palestinian Authority and the newly elected Palestinian Legislative Council, the Prime Minister of Israel and the Knesset, the US government, the government of the Russian Federation and the UN Secretary-General.



**UN SECURITY COUNCIL, PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT CONGRATULATING
THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ON FREE, FAIR ELECTORAL PROCESS,
5365TH MEETING, NEW YORK, 3 FEBRUARY 2006**

The Security Council congratulates the Palestinian people on an electoral process that was free, fair, and secure. It commends all the parties for the preparation and conduct of the elections, particularly the Central Elections Commission and the Palestinian Authority security forces, for their professionalism.

The Security Council expresses its expectation that a new Government remain committed to realizing the aspirations of the Palestinian people for peace and statehood. The Security Council welcomes President Abbas' affirmation that the Palestinian Authority remains committed to the Road Map, previous agreements and obligations between the parties, and a negotiated two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Security Council expresses its view that all members of a future Palestinian Government must be committed to the aforementioned instruments and principles.

Cognizant of the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people, the Security Council reaffirms its continuing interest in the fiscal stability of the caretaker Government, consistent with clear reform and austerity benchmarks. The Security Council notes that major donors have indicated they will review future assistance to a new Palestinian Authority Government against that Government's commitment to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map.

The Security Council reminds both parties of their obligation under the Road Map and on existing agreements, including on movement and access. It calls on both parties to avoid unilateral actions which prejudice final status issues. The Security Council underlines the need for the Palestinian Authority to prevent terrorist attacks and dismantle the infrastructure of terror. It reiterates its view that settlement expansion must stop and its concern regarding the route of the barrier.

The Security Council reaffirms its profound attachment to the vision of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The Security Council reiterates the importance of, and the need to achieve, a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions including its resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), and 1515 (2003), the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace.



**ACTING ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT, ADDRESS TO
THE 6TH ANNUAL ISRAEL-EUROPE CONFERENCE, 6 FEBRUARY 2006**

It is my pleasure to be the guest of Go-4-Europe, at your 6th Conference. I am especially pleased since over the last few years we made a tremendous effort to create a new basis for political and economic cooperation with European countries. For many years, Israel's relations with Europe were greatly influenced by European stances, which frequently caused feelings of distress or discomfort among not only Israeli policy-makers, but also among broad sectors of Israeli society. These were relations influenced largely by stances which were impatient, unobjective and lacking understanding of a significant portion of the fundamental problems the State of Israel faced over the years. However, in recent years we feel a change, which also influenced the tone of political relations and the openness for economic cooperation between Israel and Europe.

Europe is Israel's most important trade partner. The scope of mutual trade between Israel and Europe approaches \$30 billion per annum. This is an immense scope. The State of Israel purchases more from European countries than any other country in the Middle East. Of course, these relations are built, first and foremost, on the Association Agreement, which connects Israel with the European Union, and allows it, in a framework of mutual trade, to enjoy the benefits the European Union grants to members of this agreement, which came into effect on a practical level in 1996. Over the last two years, we made a significant breakthrough, due to the fact that we succeeded in regulating and removing the cloud which hung over a large section of these relations with regard to Israeli export to Europe, primarily export from areas which, unfortunately, Europe does not recognize as part of the State of Israel.

The resolution of this problem opened the final blocks which clouded our economic relations with Europe. The State of Israel is a partner to the sixth European protocol for scientific development. Over the next four years, we will invest over 190 million Euro as part of our participation in the sixth protocol of the European Union for scientific research and development, and will benefit - as we already do -

from full partnership in all the large projects of scientific development, to which Israel has a great deal to contribute. Europe has great interest in them, and the State of Israel, of course, can benefit from the strengthening and development of its economic and scientific infrastructure as part of these agreements.

The State of Israel is the only non-European country, other than China, which is a partner in the European Union's Galileo Project, which is another project in which we are investing tens of millions of Euro, but we are exposed to the most important development plans in the telecommunications field of the European Union, and Israeli companies will become an integral part of large contracts and large-scale development plans which will allow the Israeli economy to benefit from advantages it did not have in the past.

Israel's economic relations with Europe are on a path of progress which cannot be mistaken. This path also finds expression in mutual research and development agreements, in establishing national funds with many European countries, and in agreements between the State of Israel and European companies which lead in fields where there is a relative advantage for the Israeli economy and where there is a European interest in innovation and the advanced technological developments in which Israel excels. Thus, over a year ago, we signed an agreement to establish a joint fund with one of the most important companies in the world in the field of telecommunications, the French company Alcatel. We are also today cooperating with Siemens. In the next few months, Siemens will hold a two-day symposium in Germany, during which a large number of excellent Israeli hi-tech companies will be given the opportunity to meet with leading companies in Europe, in order to try, through this process, to strengthen the possibility of selling advanced Israeli products in Europe. I hope we will reach a similar understanding with the Deutsche Telekom company, whose senior executives visited with me yesterday, as part of this effort to expand cooperation with European companies.

Over the past few years, more and more European countries are expressing interest in investing in Israel and participating in central infrastructure projects. Thus, for example, the French company Alstom, the leading foreign company in the Jerusalem light-rail project - one of the most important infrastructure projects being carried out in Israel over the last few years - won the public tender over other European companies, and also over companies from other regions in the world. I frequently hear disappointment in the things our good friends from the United States tell me, due to the fact that there is an ongoing penetration of European companies in the Israeli economy, despite the fact that the tradition of mutual relations between ourselves and the United States is a tradition of excellent, beneficial and fruitful relations for Israeli society. However, the Israeli economy is an open one. One which is growing. It is an economy exposed to potential investors from every part of the world, and we are open to European investment.

Last year, we reached an unprecedented record of over \$6.25 billion in real investment in Israeli industry and the economy all around the world. A significant portion was from Europe. The sum total of investment, including financial investment in the Israeli economy over the past year, is over \$12.5 billion. Again, a significant portion of these investments was from Europe. It would have been impossible to conceive of this process. It would have been impossible to conceive of a growth of the Israeli economy of over 5.2% last year, with a forecast for growth of 4.5% in the coming year. It would have been impossible to conceive of all these investments. It would have been impossible to conceive of all this cooperation, all these agreements, the expanding network of bilateral agreements and framework agreements with various European countries and with the European Union.

It would have been impossible to conceive of the new agreement, which allows us to join other Middle Eastern countries, such as Jordan and Egypt, and become part of the pan-European accumulation agreements, were it not for the political step we took, which created a new atmosphere and new openness, as well as new opportunities for the Israeli economy. This bold, far-sighted policy of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon benefits Israeli society, not only in the field of political cooperation, but also in creating economic opportunities, new openness, in the readiness of foreign investors to take a gamble on the stability, continuity and strength of the Israeli economy. As a result of this, processes which were extremely slow in earlier years have taken on tremendous momentum over the last two years,

and for coming years. I am certain that these processes will strengthen and continue, first and foremost, if we can preserve the political momentum, and continue the opening of opportunities for changing the atmosphere in the Middle East.

I know that the reality which we face is a complex and complicated one. The easiest thing to do in such a reality is to lose our senses, panic, spread slogans, scare ourselves, and lose our basis of good will and international support and understanding which the wise, young and determined Israeli policy created for the State of Israel over the last few years. We will act differently. We will act with discretion, responsibility, calmness and caution.

As a result of the changes which are taking place in the Palestinian Authority - albeit unwanted changes - we succeeded in crystallizing broad international agreement, led by the United States, the Quartet and European countries - in the east and in the west - in which everyone supports the three principles defined by the State of Israel following the elections in the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas victory:

There will be no recognition of a Palestinian government with the participation of or under the control of Hamas, unless three conditions are met: the Hamas Charter is changed to recognize the State of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state; total dismantling of weapons and total cessation of terrorist activity; and acceptance of all agreements signed between the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel.

These three principles were defined by us, composed by us and - as a result of the good, fruitful and responsible relationship which we developed with the international community - they have now become the basis which unites the entire international community, the United States, the European countries, the State of Israel and other countries.

Our position is the accepted one. We will act accordingly, as will other countries. And with this reality, on the basis of these principles, I am certain we can continue leading the relationship of the State of Israel with the international community, and of course with the Palestinian Authority in a responsible and correct manner.

We have no intention of harming the head of the Palestinian Authority, Abu Mazen. He is the elected leader of the Palestinian Authority. He was elected in direct election by a majority of the Palestinian public, and as long as he does not cooperate with Hamas, and as long as the Palestinian government is not a Hamas government, we will cooperate with the Palestinian Authority cautiously, responsibly, and with the intention of strengthening those elements which recognize the State of Israel's right to live without terror, in safe borders and we will not play into the hands of the extremists who seek to create an endless war here, endless terror, and to undermine any chance which may exist to create new hope both for the Palestinians and for the citizens of the State of Israel.

It is for this reason that we decided to transfer the funds which we collect for the Palestinian population, for the Palestinian Authority. These funds belong to them as long as the Palestinian Authority does not cooperate with Hamas, and as long as the Palestinian government is not a Hamas government. We will no longer transfer the funds automatically. We will examine the situation carefully at all times, but we will do so out of the desire to ensure that it will be possible to maintain stability, and we will not be tempted to play into the hands of those who wish to create an atmosphere of havoc.

We will continue to fight terror. We do so every day. We will not relax and we will not stop in the north, the center of the country, or the south. We will stop anyone who tries to carry out an act of terror, fire Qassam rockets or send suicide bombers. We will find them where ever they are, and we will stop them. Under no circumstance and in no situation will we expose the citizens of the State of Israel to the danger of terrorist activity, which some of the Palestinian organizations are unwilling to stop. However, as long as the Palestinian government is not a Hamas government, we will maintain the connection obligated by our commitment to do everything to preserve the chances for peace and for a better reality in the near future.

Finally, I wish to say something about the internal atmosphere here. We are in the midst of a difficult disagreement. It did not begin today. It has continued for quite some time. It is difficult and painful, and I feel this disagreement cannot be obfuscated only by spouting slogans. However, we can speak honestly, with complete openness and seriously, with a feeling of responsibility for all sectors of the public about this disagreement, and about the measures we adopt in order to be able to live with it.

I intend to speak with everyone. I am not afraid to talk to those who fight us. And of course I will speak to those who are an inseparable part of Israeli society. They are a loved part, they are a part which made a great contribution, even if sometimes I disagree with them, even if I am of the opinion that they are mistaken, and I am concerned that they are misleading, and I am convinced that they may, heaven forbid, lead us to a path which has no exit. I will speak with everyone. I will conduct a dialogue with everyone. I will sit with everyone and try to find a way to solve our internal problems, not out of hate, not out of annoyance, not out of a desire to hurt, but out of patience - endless patience - because we have no other way.

If there is something I have learned from our collective experience over many years, it is that, despite our differences, if we can eventually preserve the basis which unites us all, there is no limit to our power, there is no limit to our possibilities, there is no limit to our chances. And I will never waive our duty to maintain the law, carry out the decisions of the courts and protect Israeli democracy at any cost, and also the need to embrace all sectors of Israeli society, and speak with them in order that we may all march forward.



**US PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006, HOUSE RESOLUTION
H.R.4681, 109TH CONGRESS, 2ND SESSION, 7 FEBRUARY 2006**

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 7, 2006

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. PENCE, Mr. WELLER, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. MACK, Ms. BEAN, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. POE, Mr. ROYCE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. NADLER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To promote the development of democratic institutions in areas under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006'.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY.

- (a) Declaration of Policy- It shall be the policy of the United States to promote the emergence of a democratic Palestinian governing authority that-
- (1) denounces and combats terrorism;
 - (2) has agreed to and is taking action to disarm and dismantle any terrorist agency, network, or facility;
 - (3) has agreed to work to eliminate anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement and the commemoration of terrorists in Palestinian society;

- (4) has agreed to respect the boundaries and sovereignty of its neighbors;
 - (5) acknowledges, respects, and upholds the human rights of all people;
 - (6) conducts free, fair, and transparent elections in compliance with international standards;
 - (7) ensures institutional and financial transparency and accountability; and
 - (8) has agreed to recognize the State of Israel as an independent, sovereign, Jewish, democratic state.
- (b) Amendments- Chapter 1 of part III of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2351 et seq.) is amended-

- (1) by redesignating the second section 620G (as added by section 149 of Public Law 104-164 (110 Stat. 1436)) as section 620J; and
- (2) by adding at the end the following new section:

SEC. 620K. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY.

- (a) Limitation- Assistance may be provided under this Act or any other provision of law to the Palestinian Authority only during a period for which a certification described in subsection (b) is in effect.
- (b) Certification- A certification described in this subsection is a certification transmitted by the President to Congress that contains a determination of the President that-
 - (1) no ministry, agency, or instrumentality of the Palestinian Authority is controlled by a foreign terrorist organization and no member of a foreign terrorist organization serves in a ministry, agency, or instrumentality of the Palestinian Authority;
 - (2) the Palestinian Authority has-
 - (A) publicly acknowledged Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state; and
 - (B) recommitted itself and is adhering to all previous agreements and understandings with the Government of the United States, the Government of Israel, and the international community, including agreements and understandings pursuant to the Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (commonly referred to as the "Roadmap"); and
 - (3) the Palestinian Authority has taken effective steps and made demonstrable progress toward-
 - (A) completing the process of purging from its security services individuals with ties to terrorism;
 - (B) dismantling all terrorist infrastructure, confiscating unauthorized weapons, arresting and bringing terrorists to justice, destroying unauthorized arms factories, thwarting and preempting terrorist attacks, and fully cooperating with Israel's security services;
 - (C) halting all anti-Israel incitement in Palestinian Authority-controlled electronic and print media and in schools, mosques, and other institutions it controls, and replacing these materials, including textbooks, with materials that promote tolerance, peace, and coexistence with Israel;
 - (D) ensuring democracy, the rule of law, and an independent judiciary, and adopting other reforms such as ensuring transparent and accountable governance; and
 - (E) ensuring the financial transparency and accountability of all government ministries and operations.
- (c) Recertifications- Not later than 90 days after the date on which the President transmits to Congress an initial certification under subsection (b), and every six months thereafter-
 - (1) the President shall transmit to Congress a recertification that the requirements contained in subsection (b) are continuing to be met; or
 - (2) if the President is unable to make such a recertification, the President shall transmit to Congress a report that contains the reasons therefor.
- (d) Congressional Notification- Assistance made available under this Act or any other provision of law to the Palestinian Authority may not be provided until 15 days after the date on which the President has provided notice thereof to the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate in accordance with the procedures applicable to reprogramming notifications under section 634A(a) of this Act.

- ` (e) Definitions- In this section:
 - ` (1) FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION- The term `foreign terrorist organization' means an organization designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 219(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189(a)).
 - ` (2) PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY- The term `Palestinian Authority' means the interim Palestinian administrative organization that governs part of the West Bank and all of the Gaza Strip (or any successor Palestinian governing entity), including the Palestinian Legislative Council.
- (c) Report by Comptroller General- Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains a review of the extent to which United States assistance to the Palestinian Authority under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law is properly audited by the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and all other relevant departments and agencies of the Government of the United States.

SEC. 3. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

- (a) Amendment- Chapter 1 of part III of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2351 et seq.), as amended by section 2(b)(2) of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

SEC. 620L. LIMITATION ON ASSISTANCE FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

- ` (a) Limitation- Assistance may be provided under this Act or any other provision of law to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank and Gaza only during a period for which a certification described in section 620K(b) of this Act is in effect with respect to the Palestinian Authority.
- ` (b) Exceptions- Subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to the following:
 - ` (1) ASSISTANCE TO MEET BASIC HUMAN HEALTH NEEDS- The provision of food, water, medicine, sanitation services, or other assistance to meet basic human health needs.
 - ` (2) OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE- The provision of any other type of assistance if the President-
 - ` (A) determines that the provision of such assistance will further the national security interests of the United States; and
 - ` (B) not less than 45 days prior to the obligation of amounts for the provision of such assistance-
 - ` (i) consults with the appropriate congressional committees regarding the specific programs, projects, and activities to be carried out using such assistance; and
 - ` (ii) submits to the appropriate congressional committees a written memorandum that contains the determination of the President under subparagraph (A).
 - ` (3) DEFINITION- In this subsection, the term `appropriate congressional committees' means-
 - ` (A) the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and
 - ` (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.
- ` (c) Marking Requirement- Assistance provided under this Act or any other provision of law to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank and Gaza shall be marked as assistance from the Government of the United States unless the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development determines that such marking will endanger the lives or safety of persons delivering such assistance.
- ` (d) Congressional Notification- Assistance made available under this Act or any other provision of law to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank and Gaza may not be provided until 15 days after the date on which the President has provided notice thereof to the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate in accordance with the procedures applicable to reprogramming notifications under section 634A(a) of this Act.

(b) Oversight and Related Requirements-

- (1) OVERSIGHT- For each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008, the Secretary of State shall certify to the appropriate congressional committees not later than 30 days prior to the initial obligation of amounts for assistance to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank or Gaza under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law that procedures have been established to ensure that the Comptroller General of the United States will have access to appropriate United States financial information in order to review the use of such assistance.
- (2) VETTING- Prior to any obligation of amounts for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 for assistance to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank or Gaza under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law, the Secretary of State shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that such assistance is not provided to or through any individual or entity that the Secretary knows, or has reason to believe, advocates, plans, sponsors, engages in, or has engaged in, terrorist activity. The Secretary shall, as appropriate, establish procedures specifying the steps to be taken in carrying out this paragraph and shall terminate assistance to any individual or entity that the Secretary has determined advocates, plans, sponsors, or engages in terrorist activity.
- (3) PROHIBITION- No amounts made available for fiscal year 2007 or 2008 for assistance to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank or Gaza under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law may be made available for the purpose of recognizing or otherwise honoring individuals who commit, or have committed, acts of terrorism.
- (4) AUDITS-
 - (A) IN GENERAL- The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall ensure that independent audits of all contractors and grantees, and significant subcontractors and subgrantees, that receive amounts for assistance to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank or Gaza under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law, are conducted for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 to ensure, among other things, compliance with this subsection.
 - (B) AUDITS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL OF USAID- Of the amounts available for each of the fiscal years 2007 and 2008 for assistance to nongovernmental organizations for the West Bank or Gaza under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law, up to \$1,000,000 for each such fiscal year may be used by the Office of the Inspector General of the United States Agency for International Development for audits, inspections, and other activities in furtherance of the requirements of subparagraph (A). Such amounts are in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

SEC. 4. UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS.

(a) Department of State Review and Report-

- (1) IN GENERAL- Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall-
 - (A) conduct an audit of the functions of the entities specified in paragraph (2); and
 - (B) submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing recommendations for the elimination of such duplicative entities and efforts.
- (2) ENTITIES SPECIFIED- The entities referred to in paragraph (1) are the following:
 - (A) The United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.
 - (B) The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.
 - (C) The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority.
 - (D) The NGO Network on the Question of Palestine.
 - (E) The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.
 - (F) Any other entity the Secretary determines results in duplicative efforts or funding or fails to ensure balance in the approach to Israeli-Palestinian issues.

(b) Implementation of Recommendations by Permanent Representative-

- (1) IN GENERAL- The President shall direct the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the United Na-

tions to seek the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report required under subsection (a)(1)(B).

- (2) WITHHOLDING OF FUNDS- Until such recommendations have been implemented, the United States shall withhold from United States contributions to the regular assessed budget of the United Nations for a biennial period amounts that are proportional to the percentage of such budget that are expended for such entities.
- (c) GAO Audit- The Comptroller General shall conduct an audit of the status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report required under subsection (a)(1)(B).
- (d) Withholding of Funds With Respect to the Palestinian Authority- The United States shall withhold from United States contributions to the regular assessed budget of the United Nations for a biennial period amounts that are proportional to the percentage of such budget that are expended for any United Nations affiliated or specialized agency that provides assistance directly to the Palestinian Authority during any period for which a certification described in section 620K(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by section 2(b)(2) of this Act) is not in effect with respect to the Palestinian Authority.

SEC. 5. DESIGNATION OF TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AS TERRORIST SANCTUARY.

It is the sense of Congress that, during any period for which a certification described in section 620K(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by section 2(b)(2) of this Act) is not in effect with respect to the Palestinian Authority, the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority should be deemed to be in use as a sanctuary for terrorists or terrorist organizations for purposes of section 6(j)(5) of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2405(j)(5)) and section 140 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. 2656f).

SEC. 6. DENIAL OF VISAS FOR OFFICIALS OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY.

- (a) In General- A visa shall not be issued to any alien who is an official of, affiliated with, or serving as a representative of the Palestinian Authority during any period for which a certification described in section 620K(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by section 2(b)(2) of this Act) is not in effect with respect to the Palestinian Authority.
- (b) Waiver- Subsection (a) shall not apply if the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees, on a case-by-case basis, that the issuance of a visa to an alien described in such subsection is vital to the national security interests of the United States.

SEC. 7. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION STATIONED AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President shall restrict the travel of officials and representatives of the Palestinian Authority and of the Palestine Liberation Organization who are stationed at the United Nations in New York City to a 25-mile radius of the United Nations headquarters building during any period for which a certification described in section 620K(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by section 2(b)(2) of this Act) is not in effect with respect to the Palestinian Authority.

SEC. 8. PROHIBITION ON PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY REPRESENTATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

- (a) Prohibition- Notwithstanding any other provision of law, it shall be unlawful to establish or maintain an office, headquarters, premises, or other facilities or establishments within the jurisdiction of the United States at the behest or direction of, or with funds provided by, the Palestinian Authority or the Palestine Liberation Organization during any period for which a certification described in section 620K(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (as added by section 2(b)(2) of this Act) is not in effect with respect to the Palestinian Authority.
- (b) Enforcement-
 - (1) ATTORNEY GENERAL- The Attorney General shall take the necessary steps and institute the necessary legal action to effectuate the policies and provisions of subsection (a).

- (2) RELIEF- Any district court of the United States for a district in which a violation of subsection (a) occurs shall have authority, upon petition of relief by the Attorney General, to grant injunctive and such other equitable relief as it shall deem necessary to enforce the provisions of subsection (a).

SEC. 9. INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

- (a) Requirement- The President shall direct the United States Executive Director at each international financial institution to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to prohibit assistance to the Palestinian Authority during any period for which a certification described in section 620K(b) of the Foreign Assistance of 1961 (as added by section 2(b)(2) of this Act) is not in effect with respect to the Palestinian Authority.
- (b) Definition- In this section, the term 'international financial institution' has the meaning given the term in section 1701(c)(2) of the International Financial Institutions Act.

SEC. 10. DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH PALESTINIAN TERROR ORGANIZATIONS.

No funds authorized or available to the Department of State or any other United States Government agency may be used for or by any officer or employee of the United States Government to negotiate, attend official meetings, or have official contacts with members or official representatives of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, or any other Palestinian terrorist organization, unless and until such organization--

- (1) recognizes Israel's right to exist;
- (2) renounces the use of terrorism;
- (3) dismantles the infrastructure necessary to carry out terrorist acts, including the disarming of militias and the elimination of all instruments of terror; and
- (4) recognizes and accepts all previous agreements and understandings between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.



WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, GENERAL SECRETARY, LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, GENEVA, 8 FEBRUARY 2006

[The letter was sent to US Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov, Under-Sec.-Gen. for Political Affairs of the UN Department of Political Affairs, Agboola Gambari, and Middle East Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement James D. Wolfensohn.]

Your Excellency,

I write this letter to you at a critical juncture in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We address your office with deep concern that all the members of the Middle East Quartet work in new ways to meet the new situation emerging from last month's Palestinian election. The World Council of Churches would commend to you to fully exercise your responsibilities in this regard. Much now depends on how the international community under your leadership responds, given the increasingly broad and dangerous implications of this unresolved conflict for the region and much of the world.

We would like to call your attention to three features of the new situation, which present opportunities for genuine progress toward peace.

First, in an earnest exercise of democratic rights by people denied rights, a sizeable majority of the Palestinian people has expressed their will through elections adjudged by international observers as free and fair. The vote sends a democratic warning to those in the international community who hold responsibility for the long-delayed fulfilment of international obligations to the Palestinian people.

The vote also calls for greater accountability from all authorities toward the basic needs and legitimate rights of people - Palestinians and, inseparable from their fate, Israelis. Policy now must

respond. As leaders of the churches of Jerusalem put it, they extend their co-operation to the new government "for the public good and the national Palestinian aspirations together with the cause of justice and peace in a non-violent way." We ask you to base your policies for peace on the same firm ground and to use your good offices to ensure that other parties to the conflict do likewise.

The direction in the immediate future will depend on whether the new Palestinian leadership will include the current response of the wider international community in its calculations or focus on narrower, regional perspectives.

Second, like any newly elected government, the new Palestinian Authority needs time to position and prove itself. We urge all members of the Quartet to demonstrate constructive patience as the new Authority fills positions, develops programs, re-evaluates old policies and demonstrates new intentions. Time is also needed to discover the new balance needed for negotiations.

Third, a peace process worthy of the name will require a third party that the World Council of Churches has described as "active, determined, objective and consistent". Our position is that the Quartet is the party needed to hold Israelis and Palestinians to equitable terms and conditions. As churches that have addressed this conflict and its implications for nearly 60 years we urge you to put a high premium on even-handedness at this critical juncture in time. To do otherwise will put peace and much else at risk, in the region and beyond.

Engagement of the new Palestinian Authority is needed by virtue of its mandate to serve the public good. Obstructionist policies, such as withholding public funds, will have grave consequences. At the human level, church-related agencies that provide medical care to the Palestinian population are already warning of immediate and acute health consequences for needy people because those who control Palestinian tax monies destined for health services are withholding funds. Indiscriminate withholding of aid will have the same effect.

On a far larger scale, hasty isolation of a government that includes Hamas over aspects of the movement's past will further exacerbate the West's already deeply scarred relations with the people of the Muslim world. At worst, isolation and stigmatisation become a self-fulfilling prophecy that greater political and cultural conflict lie ahead. Current incidents - fuelled by exclusionist perceptions on both sides - make this painfully clear.

Ending double standards is an essential element of progress. If respect for existing agreements is required of one side it must be required of the other. If democracy is the key to progress in the region, this democracy will have to be given a credible chance. If violence is incompatible with democracy and with peace, it is incompatible for both the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities.

The World Council of Churches denounces all forms of violence against civilians. We strongly condemn attacks perpetrated by Palestinian groups against innocent civilians inside the State of Israel and by the State of Israel and its defence forces inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories. A signal of similar nature from the Quartet would be a sign of new balance toward the conflict and would be widely welcomed as such in many quarters.

It is urgent and timely for all parties to return to the United Nations resolutions that address the root causes of this conflict. Extremist positions have thrived in the vacuum that has developed under their non-implementation, especially because handling of peace since Oslo raised the hopes of moderate parties and then dashed them.

The international community including the Security Council and its Quartet members bear full, continuing responsibility for the effective implementation of UN resolutions - 242, 338, 1397 and 1515 among them. The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention are pledged to end violations of the Convention that cause deprivation and suffering in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem. The International Court of Justice in its 2004 Advisory Opinion

rendered important judgements on the illegality of the barrier wall. Ignoring these legal standards serves only to prolong the conflict.

Members of the Quartet are uniquely placed to advance the work of peace. The European Union as largest donor to the Palestinian authority should set standards for the use of funds that ensure the rights, wellbeing and improved governance of the Palestinian people. We appreciate the recent signal from European Union leadership that *both* parties must recognise each other and negotiate without violence.

The United Nations, guarantor of the status of Jerusalem and upholder of the principles of international law, must reassess trends in that city now that an Islamic party will represent the Palestinian people. The unique shared status envisaged for Jerusalem is gravely threatened by the unilateral actions so evident there of late.

Russia has experienced the acute suffering of a population during war and, more recently, has responded to systemic changes in the political paradigm that shapes a nation's prospects.

The United States has through its long historical involvement gained the trust of Israel. It has a particular responsibility to help Israel find lasting security within secure and recognised borders and under the rule of law. Also, it is in the best interests of each member of the Quartet to see self-determination treated as a right to which the Palestinian people aspire, not a reward controlled by their adversary.

Public opinion in parishes and other places of concern around the world are looking to your offices for wise leadership now. There is a deep weariness with schemes that bypass the basic requirements of peace and extract a heavy toll on the two peoples who share the land.

The path to peace has indeed grown more difficult with time, yet it is still discernible. We urge you to show new movement along it now. Accompany Israeli and Palestinian leaders with courage and patience in a direction that will give their people cause for hope. We send these observations to you with the conviction that new opportunities for peace are now present. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia,
General Secretary, World Council of Churches



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON
FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS FOLLOWING A MEETING
WITH PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, RAMALLAH, 16 FEBRUARY 2006**

I am delighted to be in Ramallah today. I met President Abbas at a moment of complex transition, following the Palestinian Legislative Council elections that took place last month. We fully respect the choice the Palestinians made in a free and fair democratic contest.

I have discussed with the President how best the European Union can help him and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the current circumstances. We are the biggest provider of financial, economic and political support. We are also supporting the PA in the security field, in particular in Gaza and helping to reform the security structures.

I wish to underline that the European Union will not abandon the Palestinian people. We have never done so and we never will. We are committed to continuing to support the PA in this period of transition, until the formation of a new government. Then, we will see what is its composition and programme. Further decisions will be taken accordingly, on means and ways that allow the EU to continue supporting the people.

We are committed to continuing to work with President Abbas. He was elected last year by an overwhelming majority, with a clear platform. He will continue to be our key interlocutor.

We now await the formation of the new executive and its programme. We will evaluate our position in light of the incoming government's actions.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH AT THE OPENING SESSION OF
THE SECOND PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, 18 FEBRUARY 2006**

In the Name of God, the Gracious and Merciful

Fellow members of the second PLC; members of the Diplomatic Corps; dear guests; ladies and gentlemen;

This is a great day in the life of our Palestinian people, and of its national struggle. Today we constitutionally inaugurate our second PLC, elected by our Palestinian people in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, in free and fair elections, witnessed by the entire world, through hundreds of observers, and carried out peacefully from the onset till the end.

These elections would not have been possible should any political faction or party have been excluded, or should our East Jerusalem compatriots have been prohibited to participate. I have emphasized this matter adamantly despite all pressures, and this is what occurred in reality. I see amongst you now those who represent Jerusalem, and who represent all Palestinian political factions. My congratulations go to the brothers and sisters members of the Council on the confidence bestowed upon them by the electorate, with my wishes of success in carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to them.

On this occasion, I would like to salute the Central Elections Committee and express my appreciation for its achievement of this task in a most responsible and capable manner. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Arab and foreign election observers for their role in monitoring the elections, and I would like to particularly mention President Jimmy Carter.

Our people have proven their maturity in spirit and democratic performance through the conclusion of these legislative elections and the preceding presidential and municipal elections. The entire world should regard this fact as a certificate of eligibility to build a present and a future for our people in the modern state that our people deserve. This state will have a democratic pluralistic system, governed by the rule of law, and the spirit and ethos of this age, where each man and woman is entitled to the rights and freedoms guaranteed them by the law.

Ladies and gentlemen,

From this platform, I salute our Palestinian people in the homeland and in the Diaspora. I stress to each Palestinian that our real joy will only be complete upon the attainment of our freedom; upon the establishment of our independent state, with Jerusalem as its capital; upon the liberation of our prisoners; the day the refugee question is resolved in a just and agreed-upon manner, based on Resolution 194; the day we achieve the dream of our revolution's leader, and the builder of the first Palestinian Authority, President Yasser Arafat. I salute the members of your council who are sitting behind Israeli bars and prisons, alongside thousands of our best. I assure them all that we will spare no effort until they are released, and until I see each member taking his place in this council, and each prisoner obtaining his rightful place in society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The results of our elections have led to the creation of a new political reality, in which Hamas won the majority in the PLC. Therefore, it will be tasked with the formation of the new government. I expect the person forming the government to be designated, and the usual PLC consultations regarding this issue to start. All of this will be accompanied with the election of the PLC's presiding body and the

establishment of its various committees so as to be ready to receive the new government and its program, leading to granting it confidence.

We are looking forward to the completion of this process in according to procedures as soon as possible, because the tasks that await you are large, very large indeed. You will find from my part all the cooperation and encouragement you need, because the national interest is our first and final goal, and is above any individual or faction.

I seize this opportunity to salute our first PLC that has worked under dire circumstances and has drafted a large number of laws. It has followed up and monitored as much as possible the works of the successive governments which, in turn, also deserve our appreciation for all their initiatives and achievements. We hope that the new government will continue this process and develop its performance in a manner that achieves the interests and wishes of the people who elected and who will monitor the performance of the elected parliament and the government.

Sisters and brothers, ladies and gentlemen,

Today, in front of the second PLC, and as per past practice, I would like to address you: our people and the entire world, in the spirit of responsibility, clarity and honesty, to elaborate on the initial stages of our national experience with its difficulties, complexities, and achievements. A process that has been conducted by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - the leader of this people, and the highest political reference for its committees and institutions. Our achievements would not have been possible, without the insistence of the PLO on national unity, and its adoption of the most effective forms of struggle based on carefully examined and studied policies, governed by the national higher interest for the Palestinian people, and in accordance with international resolutions.

We have foiled plans aiming at the elimination of the political identity of the Palestinian people and its national rights. The PLO was able to carry our cause to the furthest reaches of the world, to all its peoples, until the doors of the United Nations opened for us. On that platform, President Yasser Arafat stood in our name, holding an olive branch, asking the entire world not to drop it. International and regional recognition of our people, the PLO, and our rights followed.

This constituted a political reserve from which we still draw strength and effective international presence. Likewise, we launched political initiatives with our Arabs and Muslims brothers, expressed through balanced decisions issued in Arab and Islamic summits. These decisions have placed the national rights of the Palestinian people as the central cause of both the Muslim and Arab worlds, and in a manner that addresses the entire world with the language of the modern age. This has provided us with indispensable political and moral support at all stages of our national and political struggle.

The PLO has led this important historic era despite the presence of its leader, institutions and frameworks in exile. It has confronted many harsh battles to maintain its presence, its mission, and the rights of the Palestinian people. The PLO and the Palestinian revolution could not have stayed alive nor overcome the attempts of elimination without - in addition to its obstinate military struggle - courageous political initiatives. These added momentum to the Palestinian cause and received large support both internationally and regionally. This has led to the recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and the capable spokesman of its national rights.

From this platform, which is a part of our Palestinian National Council (PNC), I emphasize the necessity of completing the dialogue among all factions and parties to activate our organization, renew its structures and frameworks, and improve its performance at all levels. We have started this dialogue a long time ago, and it is time to reach the results hoped for.

In this context, I would like to remind you of another important milestone in our national struggle: our courageous historic initiative in the 1988 session of the PNC in Algiers. This initiative entailed the declaration of the establishment of the State of Palestine in exile, and the Declaration of Independence that accompanied our recognition of Resolutions 242 and 338. This laid the foundation of our future

state and defined its contours and content, and upgraded the level of international recognition. This coincided with the outbreak of the first popular uprising (Intifada) in the year 1987, which decisively contributed to the adoption of our initiative. The world started to deal with our people, our cause, and our leadership, as one state to another state. This gave the Palestinian peace offensive at that time a political depth that went beyond a unilateral declaration to become an international commitment for all of those that recognized it and established full relations with the state of Palestine accordingly.

This political struggle bore fruit when there was an important imbalance in the international arena as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union and the start of the second Gulf War. These events necessitated a rethinking and reformulation of new equations for stability in our region. Had Palestine not been present as a recognized state, and as a PLO that embodies a strong representative political body, the world, with its new powers, would have bypassed us. No-one would have thought of us in the framework of any international or regional arrangements. Seizing the opportunity of this presence, a political process was started and the American-Palestinian dialogue, which was a taboo for many decades, was launched. The peace process was started in Madrid, and we are all aware of its chapters and developments. At the same time, there were secret channels working which led to the Oslo Accords, and the mutual recognition of the PLO and Israel.

There were many unfounded rumors regarding these Accords, all of which aim at putting them in question. Most important of these was that the Oslo Accords were signed behind the backs of the Palestinian people, since the negotiations were managed in utmost secrecy. Here I would like to repeat what I said on many occasions, namely that political action in secrecy is a familiar process in all or most negotiations carried out between two conflicting parties. As for the results of the negotiations, they are definitely public and are legitimate as they were presented to representative political institutions for approval. This happened when we submitted the Accords to the legislative and executive institutions of the PLO, which discussed, voted upon, and endorsed them.

Since then, we have accepted and respected the right of any individual, group or political faction to voice its objection on the Oslo Accords. But we have not and will not accept any questioning of the Accords' legitimacy. Indeed, from the hour they were endorsed, they became a political reality to which we remain committed.

Objectively speaking, while we do not consider Oslo to have incorporated all what we want, the Accords have led to the establishment of the first Palestinian National Authority (PNA) on parts of our homeland. They have permitted the return of thousands of our people from the Diaspora and exile. They have established this Council. While Israel wanted the PLC in the beginning to be merely an administrative council devoid of any legislative, representative, or political content, we managed imposed it as a body similar in nature to a state's parliament. We have imposed elections as the means to choosing members, and we have developed its responsibility and mandate to reach what we have reached today in the Basic Law - our temporary constitution pending the endorsement of the permanent constitution of our country.

Although the achievements at the beginning of the Oslo Accords seem to be modest for some - since the Israeli pullout at the early stages did not exceed 1% - Israel has pulled out in the subsequent phases from all our cities. The peace process was expected to end the occupation from all of the occupied territories in 1967, and solve all issues of permanent status, as per the Oslo Accords, through negotiations.

I would like to remind you how the extremists' in Israel mobilized, leading to the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin when we were still at the beginning of the path. In reality, it was not a mere political assassination, but an intentional attempt to halt the peace process that was spurring ahead. It was an attempt to substitute it with a different process consisting of denying the Palestinian partner, imposing unilateral solutions that are based on the logic of force, and imposing a reality with arms while continuing the expansion of settlements.

The subsequent Israeli policies followed a program and implemented measures aiming at the cancellation of the Oslo Accords. This froze the peace process, unleashed extremism, and destroyed all efforts to create a new atmosphere between the Palestinians and the Israelis. This all paved the way for the era of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who declared an open battle against the Palestinian people, and proceeded to systematically destroy the PA's institutions and frameworks.

During this period, the racist separation Wall was built and settlement activities in the West Bank were doubled. He introduced an iron fist policy against the Palestinian people everywhere, besieging them and their President until the latter's death.

I would like here to emphasize that we are pursuing, with our friends all over the world, the reasons of the late President, our historic leader Yasser Arafat's death. We will not close this file. The issue of his passing away will remain open until the truth is out.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The Israeli government has adopted unilateralism as a substitute for negotiations. I would like to remind you that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's step to unilaterally pull out from Gaza was interpreted from our side as a surgical procedure aimed at canceling the Road Map. We accepted the Road Map as an international initiative incorporating Palestinian and Israeli commitments on the security level, and Israeli commitments regarding halting the settlement expansion; the military pullout; the convening of an international conference; the return to the negotiation table to resolve all issues of the permanent status, namely the refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, borders and water, reaching the end of the occupation; the establishment of the desired Palestinian State, and reaching a fair and just peace.

I would like to draw your attention to an objective reality that characterized the period since the assassination of the PM Rabin: namely that Israeli extremism has succeeded in drawing us to a vicious cycle of bloody action and reaction, and has created an environment in which politics and negotiation became difficult to implement in managing the conflict.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the serious attempts, at top levels, of putting an end to the deteriorating situation as a whole. These include the Sharm Sheikh Summits, the Camp David Summit, and finally the Road Map, and US President George W. Bush's vision of the establishment of an independent, democratic, thriving Palestinian state living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. This is undoubtedly a historic development in the US position.

In this context, and based on the highest interests of our Palestinian people, a truce was reached which provided - for the first time - an unprecedented period of calm for at least three months. It was followed last year by another period of calm that we strive together in all seriousness to maintain so as to provide the proper environment to start the political process and the negotiation table on the basis of international legitimacy and signed agreements.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the PLC,

On another issue, there is much talk in an exaggerated manner regarding the size of the administrative body of the PA, and its high financial cost. However, can we ignore that the Israeli aggression during the years of the Intifada has left devastating effects on our internal situation, both economically and administratively? It has led to queues of tens of thousands of unemployed, who were forbidden to enter Israel. The Israeli policy of collective punishment, closures, checkpoints, destruction of infrastructure, uprooting of trees and many other measures that have turned Palestinians' life into hell has led to the reduction of private sector investment in Palestine, leading to the destruction and loss of the various economic institutions.

The previously described situation has led to the PNA alone having to carry this burden. It has become, due to these circumstances, responsible for solving endless problems. Foremost among these was the absorption of the unemployed, especially the thousands of new university graduates who are unable to find employment opportunities in view of the weakness of the private sector and its incapacity to absorb

them. This matter has turned the PNA, irrespective of its intentions, into the largest employer. This has led by necessity to the large bureaucracy, with ministries and institutions bloated with civil servants.

As you are all aware, this situation has burdened the budget, and we have increasingly become dependent on foreign aid. This made fulfilling the public sector requirements, in terms of salaries and other running expenses, a process that requires from every Palestinian government to constantly mobilize so as to secure funding from our Arab brothers and the international community.

While there were mistakes and excesses in the past, we still must remember the achievements in terms of institution building, and reconstruction in all fields, particularly education and health. The previous governments started - under the direction and supervision of the PLC - a comprehensive reform process aimed at correcting this exceptional situation financially through rationalizing the public sector, and lightening the burden on the budget. Despite the challenges that face this process, especially the continuation of the Israeli measures and the resulting difficult economic situation, considerable progress has been recorded. The upcoming government has - out of a sense of national responsibility - to continue this effort.

Ladies and gentlemen,

From my position as elected President of the PNA and as President of the PLO, and based on my program on which I was elected, I would like to emphasize the following:

Firstly, we, as presidency and government, will continue our commitment to the negotiation process as the sole political, pragmatic, and strategic choice through which we reap the fruit of our struggle and sacrifices over the long decades. We will find practical opportunities as we wisely manage the negotiations so as to achieve our national aims that are supported by international resolutions. As we depend on the negotiation process as a political choice, we should continue to develop other forms of peaceful popular struggle. We are all required to continue activating and strengthening the role of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of our people, to lead and oversee all matters relating to its destiny including the negotiations with the Israeli side.

Secondly, the obstruction of the negotiation process and its replacement with the iron fist policy, unilateral adventures, and the continuation of the separation wall, settlement expansion, and assassinations will only lead to further deterioration, leaving peace and stability behind. Anybody who thinks that these kinds of policies would force our people to hoist the white flag and to give up is mistaken. He does not know the reality of this people, its faith, determination and perseverance towards obtaining its full rights. Here, I would like to emphasize our full rejection of unilateralism. I urge the world, eager as it is to see peace and stability in the Middle East, and especially the Quartet and the US Administration, to immediately start serious efforts towards re-activating the negotiation process. This in turn should be conducted on the basis of international legitimacy and President Bush's vision; the Arab Peace Initiative, and the agreements and understandings signed since Oslo to the Road Map.

Thirdly, the internal changes - which occurred in the aftermath of the second PLC elections- and which led to Hamas members having the majority in the PLC, should not be used to justify further aggression against our people, or as a pretext for blackmailing it. The Palestinian people should not be punished for its democratic choice that was expressed through the ballot box. The leadership of this people, and I personally, refuse this blackmail. I ask everyone to abandon it.

Fourth, the process of reform within the PNA should not stop. I will continue to sponsor all reform initiatives, whether carried out by the Palestinian judiciary, as an implementation of a decision from our part, or any new initiatives in the same direction. I am determined to carry out my program, on which I was elected and mandated, and to apply the main tenets that I have hoisted to reach a stable, unified, strong, effective authority that provides security and safety to all its citizens; an Authority which has the ability to keep its commitments and protect the interests of its people; an Authority that respects the law, and commits to implementing it; an Authority whose institutions are committed to the separation of powers, particularly in terms of strengthening the judiciary, imposing the rule of law for all, with one legitimate arm, with a pluralistic system; an Authority that lays the foundations for

the establishment of our independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. We hope to see this state as a qualitative addition to the list of countries in the region; an addition that carries out its commitments in a credible manner, and which enjoys its rights based on justice. We do not want more than what we are entitled to by international law. As we have carried out free and transparent elections, we yearn towards seeing a government that faces the challenges and performs its tasks efficiently and capably. As we are speaking of our government, I would like to remind the members of the PLC - and members of the future government - of the need to respect all signed agreements, and to work according to the national interest to end the chaos of arms. Since everybody is participating currently in the structure and framework of a national authority with all its institutions, everybody should honor the presence of one arm, i.e. the arm of legitimacy.

Fifth, I would like to reiterate a fact which has always been the protective shield of our revolution, the PLO, and the PNA. Namely, we will not be led into any axis of any sort. As Palestinians, we are proud of the depth of our Arab and Muslim belonging; we are proud of our uniting and unifying role therein, just as we are proud of everybody standing by us, by our rights, by the justice of our cause, while respecting our independent national decision.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to dwell on one of the most important aspects of our experience within the PA, namely security. As experience in the last ten years has shown, our performance on security is the backbone on which depends the future of national project. Security means securing the citizens and the entire community, securing life in all its aspects. It means the security of all those who live on our land, and the implementation of our international commitments. We all have the responsibility of confronting the aspects of chaos that reign in some of our cities, such as looting, armed attacks, kidnapping of our foreign friends and Arab brothers who live on our land and who are among us to offer support and cooperation.

I will not permit, and the government should not permit it either, the continuation of this disgraceful phenomenon. Firm and effective measures should be taken to put an end to it. No irresponsible person will be allowed to manipulate the highest of ideals to justify the most deplorable attacks against citizens and their property or against guests and diplomatic missions.

Achieving security requires giving the security establishment all the attention it needs to enable it to perform its role, including equipping and training. The Israeli side, along with the Quartet members, should facilitate the delivery of arms and equipment to the security forces. It is also important to continue the process of restructuring the forces in accordance with the Basic Law. In this context, we will work in a serious and determined manner to activate the work of the National Security Council, so that it can play its role in drawing security policies and directing the work of the security forces.

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the PLC,

The tasks and burdens are many. The education sector requires rapid development, by building schools, institutions, and universities that are capable of keeping up with intellectual and social progress. Modern education, based on the requirements of development, the need to open up to the world, the tenets of free thinking and creativity, and the ethos of resisting chauvinism is the safety valve for raising new generations. It is necessary for creating a healthy atmosphere that contributes to development, progress and modernization for our society and people. In addition, there are other sectors: health, economy, industry, agricultural, commerce, culture, sports, tourism, and the environment, all of which require the continuation and development of what we want towards the creation of a free, advanced society and a new, hopeful, forward looking Palestinian person. In addition, there is the need to care for the disabled and injured, families of martyrs and prisoners, the young unemployed and poor families. Indeed, we cannot forget that the large majority of our people are living under the poverty line.

Building a state and a society that qualify as modern and progressive requires us all to safeguard the achievements obtained by women in the Palestinian society, and to prevent any undermining of their role. The Palestinian woman has struggled, resisted occupation, and stood fast on her land alongside

men. She was an equal to men in martyrdom and imprisonment, and she must be an equal to him in all rights, just as she was an equal in all duties.

I would like to emphasize the need to protect public and individual freedoms in accordance with the law. These cannot be undermined under any pretext. These include the freedom of expression, belonging, and other freedoms, including the freedom of civil society institutions.

Another issue that I would like to remind you all of relates to the social and national fabric of our Palestinian people. Muslims and Christians of Palestine are equal citizens in front of the law. We are committed to provide, protect and care for all the Muslim and Christian shrines. We will not allow any group to start ethnic disturbances. Palestine is the cradle of monotheistic religions; it is the land of Al Aqsa, and the land of the Nativity Church and the Holy Sepulcher.

This leads me to the issue of Jerusalem, the beating heart of Palestine. I would like to assert in front of you, and in front of the entire world, especially the Israelis, that the current measures undertaken to isolate the city, expel its citizens in what is a form of ethnic cleansing of Palestinian Christians and Muslims alike, and the insistence to Judaize the city, along with the other Israeli measures that contradict international law, will not be legitimate, and will not be a matter accepted by any Palestinian citizen. The Israeli obstinacy regarding Jerusalem and its future will prevent the achievement of our desired goal, namely a just peace between the states of Palestine and Israel.

I realize, and so do you, the extent of the dangers that threaten the city of Jerusalem and its residents. I urge the Muslim and Arab worlds and the Christian world to lend a helping hand to Palestinians in Jerusalem, to provide means for their steadfastness so that they remain there. We will try our utmost to provide the means for our people to remain in Jerusalem.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In your name, I would like to present my greetings, appreciation and gratitude to all our brothers in the Arab countries, to our brothers in the Muslim world, and to our friends in the entire world, peoples and governments, for their support, help, and recognition of our Palestinian people.

I address myself to the Israelis, especially that they are on the verge of parliamentary elections. I guarantee to them that the path to security can only pass through a just peace. We are confident that there is no military solution to the conflict. Negotiations between us as equal partners should put a long-due end to the cycle of violence.

I tell them in all honesty and clarity that the continuation of occupation and settlement expansion - with its latest attack targeting the Jordan Valley area to isolate it from the remainder of the Palestinian lands in the West Bank - that checkpoints, arbitrary killings, the separation wall, and arrests will only lead to hatred, despair and continued conflict.

Let us together make peace today before tomorrow. Let us live in two neighboring states. Let us educate our children the culture of life, not the culture of death. Let us teach them that the free man is the one who defends the freedom of the other and that he who loves God, loves mankind.

I would like to stress, in particular, that the era of unilateral solutions is over. Attempting to determine the future of our people through cantonization, reservations, the tearing-up of the West Bank, land grab in the Jordan Valley, the separation of Jerusalem, and the consolidation of settlement blocks will close the window for a solution between us.

There is a Palestinian partner who is ready to sit at the negotiation table with an Israeli partner so as to reach a solution that is based on international legitimacy, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Road Map. A solution that is based on respecting all previous agreements and commitments.

We want a just solution that guarantees the fulfillment of peace, not a unilateral, partial, or temporary solution that will kill the chance for peace, nor a state with provisional borders. We are awaiting the Israeli government to determine its direction and make its decision in this regard. Our decision is to be completely ready to start permanent status negotiations immediately.

I assure the world that we strongly believe that justice prevails over force. We will have the same perseverance in attaining our rights and desire for peace. The entire world should bear its responsibility to make this dream come true. Peace in the Holy Land. Peace in the land of Peace. - Thank you.



**MARWAN BARGHOUTHI, MESSAGE TO THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE 2ND PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,
HADARIM PRISON, ISRAEL, 18 FEBRUARY 2006**

[Note: Marwan Barghouti, PLC member and West Bank Fateh leader, was captured by Israel in March 2002, convicted of the murder of five people in June 2004, and sentenced to 5 life sentences. He does not recognize the jurisdiction of the court. In the 2006 PLC elections he won the top place of the Fateh list, but has been unable to fulfill his duties as lawmaker due to his imprisonment.]

The brothers and sisters in the Palestinian Legislative Council, May God keep you, the brothers and the sisters who represent both the nationalist and Islamic powers.

Our great Palestinian citizens:

It is my honor and pleasure to speak to you through this humble message on this honorable and historic day, knowing that God will guide you to success in your tasks.

The noble deputies:

On this occasion I begin with the verses of glorification and reverence to our great nation, those killed in its defense, and to the highest of them all, President Yasser Arafat, the great Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the leader Fathi Al Shafaqi, the great leftist Abu Ali Mustafa, leader Abul Abbas and doctor and leader Thabet Thabet and all the other great people who were killed by the occupation while defending our homeland.

Our Legislative Council meets today to fulfill the will of our great nation that exercised its democratic right in an unprecedented model in the history of our nation, including its numerous holy sites.

The policy of blockades, starvation, assassinations and detentions cannot break the will of the Palestinian people.

I take this occasion to bestow great thanks and pleasure for all of these achievements and that of the elections, and for our brother and President Mahmoud Abbas. He created initiatives during a trying time in order to revive our people and the Fateh movement from a crisis of national identity within the confines of our current revolution.

I also must thank the National Authority, and its security and civil institutions, along with thanking the first Legislative Council, and the Central Elections Commission and its crew.

The noble deputies:

I call on the new Legislative Council to put the issue of Jerusalem, its protection, its rescue, the support of its enterprises, a refusal and resistance of its Judaization atop the priorities. Whatever budget or work is required to save Palestine's heart must be spent.

The first task and the main criterion to the second Legislative Assembly is also the battle for freedom and independence for Palestine, an end to the Israeli occupation, the return of all refugees to their lands, and freedom for all prisoners.

And the second task and that should be our in front of our eyes is that we achieve and maintain true Palestinian unity. This is not only for us here, but for our national homeland, the exiles, and our ability to democratically coexist. We must remember the holiness of Palestinian blood and it must never be shed among us.

And the third task is to demand that our Council stand by its decision and right to resist until this occupation leaves. We must achieve our national rights and then we may stop resisting, but not until then. But we must be unified in this.

The fourth task is to respect the basics, rules, facts, and conditions of the democratic political regime. This includes the Palestinian Basic Law and its application, working for public freedom of speech and information, women's rights, freedom of opinion and belief, freedom of the press and the individual freedoms that the Basic Law reinforces.

The fifth task is to guarantee a basic change in PA organizations and its civil institutions, and fight the management, financial, security, and political corruption, and judge the ones who have committed illegal acts, such as those who stole public funds.

The sixth task which our nation faces is to establish law and order and end the security chaos which threatens Palestinian society and works against the national benefit.

The seventh task is to reconstruct the national economy and to make it suitable for needed local, Arab, and international investment.

The first step is to fight poverty and unemployment, and to ensure that when our children graduate from High School or University, that there are jobs available to them, despite Israeli closures and restrictions.

The noble deputies:

We aspire to creative cooperation between the deputies and the different blocs for the sake of achieving what our great nation, which granted us this privilege and confidence, want of us. We will not be arbitrary, which is a major obstacle for democracy. We will be fair and work as partners as we were raised to be: partners in the field, and partners in the Parliament.

From my cell I heed that call to the venerable council that the year of 2006 is the year of liberation of all prisoners and detainees.

Your brother,

Marwan Al Barghouti
From Hadarim Prison / Cell Number 28.



**ISRAELI CABINET, STATEMENT ON ADOPTED MEASURES VIS-À-VIS
THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY, JERUSALEM, 19 FEBRUARY 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

At the weekly cabinet meeting today (Sunday, 19 February 2006):

1. Ministers were briefed on Palestinian affairs following the Palestinian Authority (PA) elections and determined policy in light of the swearing-in of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC).

Acting Prime Minister Olmert made the following remarks:

"From Israel's point-of-view, a new situation has been created. Israel has defined threshold conditions for holding contacts with Palestinians in the Hamas administration and it will continue to act accordingly. Israel has proven that it is interested in acting on behalf of regional peace and stability. The disengagement is a main example of this, at the base of which lies the

desire to have here two states for two peoples living side-by-side in stability, security, and peace. Of course, Israel will continue to see to the personal security of Israeli citizens and will not compromise on this issue now or in the future.

"It is clear that in light of the Hamas majority in the PLC and the instructions to form a new government that were given to the head of Hamas, the PA is - in practice - becoming a terrorist authority. The State of Israel will not agree to this. Israel will not compromise with terrorism and will continue to fight it with full force. However, there is no intention of harming the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population. Israel will not hold contacts with the administration in which Hamas plays any part - small, large, or permanent.

"From our point-of-view, the swearing-in of the PLC means that Hamas has - in effect - taken control of the PA. Israel views the rise of Hamas as a dangerous milestone that turns the PA into a terrorist authority. This new situation will influence the future of Israeli-PA relations and will begin a period in which ties with the PA are downgraded, unless Hamas fully accepts the principles that the international community has presented to it: Recognition of the State of Israel and abrogation of the Hamas Covenant, the renunciation of terrorism and the dismantling of terrorist infrastructures (by adopting the Roadmap and accepting its principles), and recognizing all understandings and agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

"It must be pointed out that the international community's point-of-reference is the day on which a Palestinian government is formed. Until then, the international community will continue to see it as the main address, including that regarding the continued transfer of financial assistance. The US and the EU include Hamas on their lists of terrorist organizations and are refraining - at this stage - from any contacts with it. We will continue to demand that the PA fully honor the three conditions that the international community has set before it.

"Until this happens, we will take a series of steps, some of which we will decide on today. In any case, Israel has no intention of bringing about the collapse of civil frameworks and creating a humanitarian crisis in the PA. Israel will continue to act determinedly against terrorism and against terrorists. The new situation, in which Hamas members have been elected to the PLC, does not change this."

OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Amos Yedlin, ISA Director Yuval Diskin, National Security Council Chairman Giora Eiland, and Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Maj.-Gen. Yosef Mishlav briefed ministers on the results of the recent PA elections.

The cabinet decided as follows:

"It is decided that, upon the swearing-in of the Hamas dominated PLC yesterday (Saturday, 18 February 2006), and upon the upcoming conclusion of the PA transitional government, the PA will become a terrorist authority unless Hamas, which controls the PA, fully accepts the following threshold conditions as determined by Israel and approved by the Quartet:

- Recognition of the State of Israel and the abrogation of the Hamas Covenant;
- Renunciation of terrorism and the dismantling of terrorism infrastructures;
- Recognition of agreements and understandings between Israel and the Palestinians.

A. Therefore, the cabinet immediately decides - at this stage - to implement a series of measures vis-à-vis the PA:

- i. Upon the conclusion of the transitional government, no funds will be transferred from Israel to the PA;
- ii. Israel will appeal to the international community so that, upon the formation of the transitional government, the international community will refrain from all financial assistance to the PA except for humanitarian aid given directly to the Palestinian population;

- iii. Transfers of means and assistance to the Palestinian security services will be prevented;
 - iv. The movement of VIPs connected to Hamas, including members of the PLC, will continue to be restricted in all areas under Israeli control;
 - v. Given the heightened security risks, security checks at crossings - especially Karni and Erez - will be increased, regarding both people and goods. Activities to upgrade the Gaza Strip crossings will continue in order to enable more effective security oversight.
- B. All measures necessary to thwart acts of terrorism against Israel will continue, both in the Gaza Strip and in the Gaza Strip; acceleration in construction of the security fence will continue. [...]



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2712TH GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 27 FEBRUARY 2006**

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Ministers assessed, over lunch, the situation in the Middle East. High Representative Javier Solana briefed Ministers on his visit to Israel and the West Bank. Ministers endorsed, against the background of the Quartet's appeal for measures to facilitate the work of the interim Palestinian government, the Commission's intention to provide additional emergency assistance as well as to authorize the (partial) release of resources from the World Bank Trust Fund. The President noted that Ministers would return to the issue of the Middle East at their informal meeting in March in Salzburg.



PROGRAM OF THE HAMAS GOVERNMENT, 11 MARCH 2006

[The following is the unofficial translation from the Arabic original of the program as published by the Palestine Media Center; it was first published in Arabic in Al-Ayyam on 17 March.]

Hamas government pledges to:

- 1) Remove the occupation and settlements and demolish the apartheid-separation Wall; establish an independent, fully sovereign Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital; and reject all partial solutions, dictated policies, and *faits accomplis*;
- 2) Uphold Palestinian refugees' Right of Return to their homes and properties, as an individual and general right on which there is no compromise;
- 3) Work toward the release of prisoners; confront occupation policies such as assassinations, arrests, incursions, collective punishment, annexations, settlement expansion, and particularly the Judaization of Jerusalem; and utilize the decision of the International Court of Justice regarding the Wall and its regimes;
- 4) Uphold the belief that resistance in its various forms is a legitimate right of Palestinians to bring an end to the occupation and to secure their national rights;
- 5) Cooperate with the international community to end the occupation, remove settlements, and withdraw completely from lands occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, to achieve calm and stability during this phase;
- 6) Comprehensively reform the domestic policies, including fighting corruption, ending unemployment, and rebuilding society and public institutions based on democratic principles, which guarantee fairness, equality, inclusion, political pluralism, the rule of law, governmental system of checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- 7) Rebuild the institutions on a foundation of democracy, professionalism, and nationalism—not in accordance with party affiliations;
- 8) Abide by the March 2005 agreement reached by the various Palestinian political parties regarding the PLO;

- 9) Work with the signed agreements, with the highest sense of responsibility, guided by an obligation to protect the interest, rights, and principles of the Palestinian people;
- 10) Work with international resolutions/decisions in a manner that protects the rights of the Palestinian people;
- 11) Preserve Palestinians' independent decision-making process;
- 12) Work to revive the support of the Arab and Islamic world for Palestinians and their cause, given that we are Arab and Islamic;
- 13) Establish positive, friendly, and balanced ties with Arab, Islamic and various other nations of the world and international institutions, based on mutual respect;
- 14) Work toward a free link between the villages and towns of the West Bank and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; work for a permanent opening of the crossings with Egypt and Jordan; and work for the construction of the seaport and the reopening of the airport;
- 15) Protect of democracy and strengthen the peaceful transition of power;
- 16) Conclude municipal elections;
- 17) Support the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem;
- 18) Strengthen the rule of law;
- 19) Guarantee personal, property, and national security;
- 20) Reform of the judicial system's independence and transparency;
- 21) Protect personal and public freedoms, including the freedom of expression/opinion and the formation of political parties and the prohibition against political arrests;
- 22) Build civil society and develop civic institutions;
- 23) Conduct financial and administrative reform; strengthen the methods of accountability; and enact laws against mismanagement of public funds and for party affiliation-based employment;
- 24) Develop all institutions that care for needs of the injured and for families of martyrs;
- 25) Protect the Islamic and Christian Waqf (trust)
- 26) Protect the poor, weak and those with special needs; and support the institutions that address these needs;
- 27) Improve the standard of living, public services, and social, health and educational networks available to those in need;
- 28) Develop an National Development Plan with special attention to human development;
- 29) Protect the rights of women, children, youth and the family;
- 30) Support youth organizations;
- 31) Develop a national plan for alleviating poverty and unemployment;
- 32) Work with the housing sector to find a solution for housing shortages and exorbitant costs;
- 33) Strengthen the education sector and develop the educational institutions;
- 34) Develop the health care sector on all levels through increased regional cooperation and cooperation with international organizations; and work for achieving self-sufficiency in the health care sector;
- 35) Develop the agriculture, livestock and marine-life sectors; encourage exports; and assist local food industries;
- 36) Develop the economic sector by encouraging investment, outlawing monopolies, protecting workers' rights, increasing exports, and developing trade with the international community;
- 37) Strengthen the role of cultural institutions;
- 38) Support an independent media and protect journalists and the media; and
- 39) Reactivate professional unions.



**EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY, STATEMENT ON THE ISRAELI ATTACK
ON JERICHO PRISON, VIENNA, 15 MARCH 2006**

*[Statement after the Israeli attack on Jericho, the EU expressed its
concern at the events that took place on 14 March 2006.]*

The Presidency is gravely concerned at the events that took place on 14 March 2006 in the West Bank, especially in Jericho, and in Gaza.

The Presidency stresses the need to take the appropriate measures to restore calm and order. It calls upon Israel and the Palestinian Authority to exercise restraint and to weight carefully the impact of their actions in order to prevent further escalation.

The Presidency strongly condemns the taking of hostages and calls upon the Palestinian Authority to ensure the protection of foreign nationals and property.

The Presidency remains in close contact with all concerned parties in order to monitor the situation closely.

The Presidency recalls that the European Union remains committed to support the Palestinian people and underlines the importance of a peaceful environment.



**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ, ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC),
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINISTERIAL MEETING, JEDDAH, 16 MARCH 2006**
[EXCERPTS]

Based upon the decision of the 3rd Extraordinary Summit Conference held in Makkah Mukarramah on 7-8 December 2005 and after consultations made by the OIC Secretary-General with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Yemen, Chairman of the 32nd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) and the Foreign Minister of Malaysia, Chairman of 10th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (ISC), the OIC Secretary General convened the First Ministerial Meeting of the Executive Committee[1] of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 15 Safar 1427H (15 March 2006). [...]

The Meeting discussed the following items included on its agenda: The publication of the defamatory caricatures; the issue of Palestine; the situation in Iraq. [...]

THE ISSUE OF PALESTINE

The Meeting commended the Palestinian legislative elections, which have demonstrated the ability of the Palestinian people to organize free and democratic elections, as attested by all observers. The meeting expressed its appreciation and respect for the will of the Palestinian people. The Meeting further reiterated its full support for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and its institutions and for the Palestinian national dialogue aimed at forming a national-unity government. The Meeting called on the international community to respect the will of the Palestinian people and avoid any pre-conceived judgments on the new Government. The Meeting also invited the international community to refrain from applying prohibitive standards to the elected Palestinian leadership.

The Meeting called on the Quartet Committee to bring necessary pressure to bear upon Israel in order to put an end to its practices, which are in contradiction with the Roadmap and the international legality, and condemned the unilateral Israeli measures carried out by the occupation authorities, including the isolation of the eastern sector of the West Bank (the Jordanian Ghor) from the rest of the Palestinian territories.

The Meeting strongly condemned Israel's brutal aggression on Jericho jail on 14 March 2006, which resulted in the killing of a number of Palestinians and the arrest of the Popular Front's Secretary General and his inmates. This aggression further demonstrates Israel's violation of international agreements and conventions. The Meeting, accordingly, appealed to the international community and the Quartet to immediately intervene in order to put an end to the continuous Israeli aggression and to ensure the immediate handing over of the Palestinian inmates back to the Palestinian authority.

The Meeting requested the international community to stop the double standard policy in dealing with the Palestinian issue and to adopt balanced measures towards the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people so as to relieve them from the daily suffering and aggression to which they continue to be exposed.

The Meeting called for empowering the Palestinian people to establish their independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Roadmap, the UN Security Council Resolution 1515, and other relevant international resolutions. The Meeting called on the international community to support and help the Palestinian people and their national economy to meet their urgent needs in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Meeting reaffirmed the centrality of Al-Quds Al-Sharif for the Muslim Ummah and condemned the Israeli measures aimed at altering the Arab-Islamic identity of this holy city by attempts to isolate it through settlements and separation wall; by depopulating it; and by attacking its Islamic and Christian sacred shrines. The Meeting therefore underlined the seriousness of the Israeli threats and warned of the dangers to the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque, particularly from the excavations that Israel is making beneath the very foundations of the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and the attempts by extremists to assault this sacred shrine.

The Meeting paid tribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), including his international contacts to explain the position of the OIC on the issue of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif. The Meeting urged continued efforts to be made in cooperation with the Member States and the international community so as to exhort them to continue to provide political and material support to the Palestinian people in order to enable them to achieve their independence and establish their independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. [...]



**RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN, MESSAGE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS
IN THE ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT, KHARTOUM, 28 MARCH 2006**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad to be able to use this excellent opportunity to address all Arab states by using the participants in this summit in Khartoum as intermediaries.

In Russia we are happy with the increasing contribution the Arab world and your competent organization are making to resolving the global problems that face humanity today. We are impressed by the Arab League's active participation in the collective search for ways to strengthen international stability, ensure steady development, and find political solutions with firm legal bases to conflicts.

I am well aware that the heads of state and peoples of the Arab world, and in other Muslim states, share Russia's and the international community's growing concern with regards to the danger resulting from new divisions among the international community. It is our deep conviction that the time has come to act and to act together under the auspices of the United Nations as a key player. As the events of the last few years in the Middle East have shown, unilateral actions do not resolve problems and even aggravate them. Russia, a multi-confessional country that has recently received observer status at the Organization of the Islamic Conference, has firm intentions to make a significant contribution to this teamwork.

As a permanent UN Security Council member, current holder of the G8 Presidency, and active participant in the Middle East Quartet, we are going to develop consensual approaches to find solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East and in northern Africa. The same applies to issues concerning social, economic and political modernization in the Arab world. Progress in this direction must be based on initiatives made by the countries of the region, the experience and traditions of the people living here, and in the spirit of a partnership between civilizations. Events should not be rushed in an artificial way, nor should outside pressure be applied.

Of course, the present situation in the Middle East and northern Africa gives us cause for concern. Events that took place here recently have had a negative affect on international affairs in general. Moreover, such affairs are starting to take on an inter-civilizational aspect. Those who would like to sow seeds of discord and distrust between cultures, religions and ethnic groups for selfish ends are trying to take advantage of the situation. Of course, this is not good for joint efforts to fight against international terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and other such threats.

Renewing the Arab-Israeli settlement process and, first and foremost, using the Road Map as a basis for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a priority today. Along with this it is necessary to approach new realities in a constructive and pragmatic way, including the results of the recent democratic elections in Palestine. Having understood this and basing our actions on the Quartet's coordinated position, we have begun a dialogue with the Hamas movement.

It is important that all parties in the settlement adhere to the principles for political negotiations firmly and without retreating. These principles are contained in UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515, and in the agreements that have already been achieved. Parties must also abstain from unilateral measures and violence. We support the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, who is devoted to such an approach.

Russia takes a positive view of the Arab peace plan that was accepted at the Arab League summit in Beirut in 2002. In our opinion, this Arab initiative allows us to reach interdependent strategic goals, namely ending the occupation that began in 1967, creating an independent Palestinian state, and ensuring Israel's security. Were the Israeli side and the new Palestinian political forces to consent to this plan, then this would set the peace process in motion.

Today it is crucially important to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, and to prevent it from falling into civil war. We can achieve this only through consent on a national level, including with respect to ending the foreign military presence. In connection with this, we highly appreciate the Arab League's initiative to engage in a wide dialogue with representatives from the leading political forces and various ethnic and religious communities in Iraq.

I am convinced that it is necessary to diminish the tension surrounding Lebanon and Syria based on the corresponding UN resolutions and without any third party intervening in Syrian or Lebanese internal affairs. We are in favour of Syria and Lebanon developing good neighbourly relations in which there is cooperation on an equal footing.

Russia will continue to help find solutions to other disputes in the region, in particular with respect to talks dedicated to finding a settlement to the problem in Darfur and implementing the comprehensive peace treaty between northern and southern Sudan.

We are ready to develop cooperation with the League of Arab States on multiple levels. I am confident that bilateral Russian-Arab cooperation will become stronger and expand in the interests of ensuring the peace, security and prosperity of our countries.



**STATEMENT BY CHURCH LEADERS ON ISRAELI ELECTIONS,
JERUSALEM, 29 MARCH 2006**

The Patriarchs and church leaders of Jerusalem have issued the following statement which was written after the elections in Israel.

The Israeli citizens voted yesterday for a new Knesset, from whose members a Government is expected to be established within the coming weeks. However, this election does not end the concerns over a possible continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for long time to come.

Despite today's publication of the Israeli election results, it is clear to us that the politician who is going to formulate the coming Israeli government will continue to have significant margins of operation, between resuming the Peace Process with the Palestinians and further escalating the relations with them.

On this occasion we wish to express our concerns regarding the frequent talks on Israeli intentions to proceed in implementing unilateral measures in the West Bank, while seemingly ignoring the Palestinians and their democratically-elected leadership.

We urge the elected Israeli leadership to demonstrate courage and wisdom by resuming the Peace Process with the Palestinians. At the same time, we urge the Palestinian leaders to send a clear message of peace to the Israeli citizens, as well. We are confident that the vast majority of the Israelis and Palestinians are tired of the conflict and eager to live in security, peace and justice.

The international community is called to explain to all parties, but especially to the Israeli decision-makers, who are the dominant decision-makers for the time being in the Holy Land, that unilateral measures will probably bring some temporary solutions, but such measures will not end the mutual mistrust and misunderstanding between the two peoples living in this beloved and blessed Land.

Our prayers are with all peoples and leaders, especially those who will work for peace and justice in the Holy Land based on International Law and resolutions and not on unilateral dictations or violence. As Christian leaders we are determined to do all we can to promote peace, mutual understanding and justice amongst all, hoping to find a similar determination from the religious leaders of Judaism and Islam.

Finally we would express a message of hope and trust in the Almighty that our peoples and Land will enjoy, someday, peace and prosperity, based on respect to all human beings.

Patriarch Theophilos III: Greek Orthodox Patriarchate

Patriarch Michel Sabbah: Latin Patriarchate

Patriarch Torkom II: Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate

Pier Battista Pizzaballa, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land

Anba Abraham: Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

Swerios Malki Mourad: Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate

Abune Grima: Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate

Paul Nabil Sayyah: Maronite Patriarchal Exarchate.

Bishop Riah Abu Al-Assal: Episcopal Church of Jerusalem & the Middle East

Bishop Mounib Younan: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land

Pierre Malki, Exarch for the Syrian Catholics - Jerusalem

Archimandrite Mtanious Haddad: Greek Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate.



**QUARTET STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE,
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 30 MARCH 2006**

The Quartet recalled its statement of January 30 and its call for the new Palestinian government to commit to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap.

The Quartet welcomed President Abbas' call for the new Palestinian government to commit to a platform of peace and, having carefully assessed the program of the new government approved on March 28, noted with grave concern that the new government has not committed to the principles spelled out on 30 January.

The Quartet recalled its view that future assistance to any new government would be reviewed by donors against that government's commitment to the principles outlined above. The Quartet concurred that there inevitably will be an effect on direct assistance to that government and its ministries.

The Quartet encouraged continued humanitarian assistance to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian people. The Quartet noted in that context the importance of improved movement and access.

The Quartet reiterated its commitment to the principles outlined in the Roadmap and previous statements, and reaffirmed its commitment to a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict leading to two democratic states living side by side in peace and security.



**PALESTINIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MAHMOUD ZAHHAR,
LETTER TO UN SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN, MINISTER'S OFFICE,
GAZA, 4 APRIL 2006**

At the outset of my first letter to Your Excellency, I have the pleasure to avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation for your continuous efforts and work in order to consolidate the values of justice, equality and development and the maintenance of international peace and security. I am also pleased to express through you our appreciation for the role of the United Nations and its organs and specialized agencies in providing the necessary support to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). In this regard, I would like to affirm the importance of the role of the United Nations and its historical and permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the attainment of a just and comprehensive solution of all the issues are realized. I would also like to affirm your important and constructive role within the Quartet in order to put an end to the Israeli occupation, the conflict and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace. I address myself through this letter to Your Excellency to work with the Quartet to initiate serious and constructive dialogue with the PNA and its new cabinet.

The new Palestinian cabinet assumed its responsibility and began its work on 30 March 2006 and I was assigned the role of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the PNA. This new cabinet resulted from the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to choose their government through free and fair democratic elections to which the United Nations and the entire world witnessed. We expect the international community to respect the democratic choice of the Palestinian people and to work with this new cabinet in order to enhance this democratic course and to protect political pluralism through the achievement of peace and stability in the region.

It is my hope, Your Excellency, to work with the international community and the Quartet in order to continue its support for the Palestinian people and their institutions, and to enable the Palestinian people to attain their legitimate rights, including their right to establish their fully sovereign independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of the Palestine refugees, including their right to return and compensation. We also hope that some countries will reconsider their positions and their hasty decisions, particularly with regard to the withholding of assistance and resorting to the language of threats instead of dialogue. I would also like to assure Your Excellency of the readiness of our cabinet for serious and constructive dialogue and our readiness to work with the United Nations and countries of the world to promote international peace and security through the achievement of peace and stability in our region, based on a just and comprehensive solution.

Your Excellency, Israel, the occupying Power, continues with its illegal colonial policies through the seizure and annexation of our land in its attempts to create a fait accompli on the ground. They have done so through its expansion of colonial settlements, including the actual commencement of implementing the so-called E1 plan, which aims at the total confiscation of East Jerusalem and the division of the West Bank into cantons isolated from each other. This is in addition to the recent Israeli measures to isolate the Palestinian Al-Aghwar (Jordan Valley) and prevent its inhabitants from reaching their farms and demolishing their homes with the view of forcing them to leave through these measures and the annexation of this area. This will ultimately diminish any hopes for the achievement of settlement and peace based on a two-State solution.

The Israeli occupying forces also continue with its aggression of our people under occupation by using excessive military force as it has done in the last few days by shelling and destroying infrastructure, including the civil and sport buildings, in which the soccer field in Gaza was targeted on two occasions. This aggression is carried out through its use of using military planes and heavy artillery against densely populated civilian areas. They have continued their policy of extra-judicial executions; the imposition of siege and closure on several areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory; the withholding of financial dues owed to the Palestinian people; and through the transformation of the military checkpoints at the entrances of cities and towns of the West Bank to what is similar to international crossings. Moreover, the closure and siege in the Gaza Strip has led to the creation of a tragic humanitarian situation. This has caused many international and humanitarian agencies to report and warn against the deterioration of the humanitarian situation stemming from the obstruction of entry by the occupying forces of the most basic humanitarian assistance, such as medicines, food products, including flour and baby formula to the Gaza Strip. Israel is undertaking all these illegal measures as the world watches and listens. Israel continues to commit these grave violations of international law and international humanitarian law without any concern acting as if it is a State above the law.

The international community is called upon today to take urgent and tangible measures to put an end to these grave Israeli violations and to put pressure on the government of Israel to comply with international law, particularly international humanitarian law, implement international agreements and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. In addition to this, we call on the international community to reject all unilateral measures and solutions and to undertake its obligations and responsibilities, particularly with regard to respect and assurance of respect for the applicability of international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as has been reaffirmed in several Security Council resolutions.

Your Excellency, we believe in the justice of our cause and the ability of our people to be steadfast in their struggle against military occupation of our land and against Israel's illegal measures. We also believe that justice and law are the basis of the solution and for security and stability in the region. The logic of might and the imposition of facts on the ground are invalid and void and will only lead to more destruction and lack of stability. Like all other people in the world, we look forward to live in peace and security and for our people to live a dignified life in freedom and independence, side by side with our neighbors in this sacred part of the world.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr. Mahmoud Zahhar
Minister of Foreign Affairs



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY, SPEECH ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS,
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, STRASBOURG, 5 APRIL 2006**

I am appearing before the European Parliament at a critical time for the future of the Middle East peace process, immediately after the forming of a new Palestinian government and the holding of elections in Israel.

Allow me first to describe how I see the present situation, before going on to set out the points on which, in my view, Europe's position should be based at this delicate juncture.

Present situation

In the occupied territories, Hamas has taken over the reins of government. Its programme, as presented by Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, is unfortunately unacceptable to the international community. It does not give any clear indication that the Hamas government is prepared to respect the principles established by the European Union: eschewing the use of violence as a means of settling the conflict, recognising the State of Israel and observing the agreements signed between the Palestinians and Israel.

It needs to be pointed out once more that there is nothing arbitrary about those principles. On the contrary, they are the minimum requirements if the political ideal consistently championed by the EU is to become a reality. That ideal is none other than a negotiated solution leading to the creation of a viable Palestinian state in peaceful coexistence with Israel under the principles of international law. Obviously, there can be no negotiation if the parties do not recognise one another. There can be no peaceful settlement if the parties resort to arms in order to resolve the conflict. Nor can there be any solution based on the principles of international law if the parties disregard the fundamental principle that agreements are made to be honoured ("pacta sunt servanda").

Ultimately, the unwillingness of Hamas to come into line with our principles, in spite of some very light steps, along with the fact that Hamas appears on the European list of terrorist organisations, must inevitably have consequences for the EU: the impossibility of regarding Hamas as a valid partner until it changes its stance.

In Israel, the election results are open to a number of interpretations. It is not my intention to engage in an in-depth analysis of the elections, but I think some brief comments will help us to understand what to expect from the political picture to emerge from them.

- It should first be pointed out that, although there was a clear winner, Kadima, that party did not achieve the results it was hoping for and this will affect negotiations for the formation of a coalition government, although Labour will be the basis for this coalition.
- Secondly, purely political factors can be seen to have carried less weight and economic and social factors more weight; this explains partly the scores achieved by Labour, by the pensioners' party or by parties with a very limited social or language basis (Shas, the ultra-Orthodox Sephardic Jews' party, and Yisrael Beiteinu, the Russian-speaking community's party).
- Thirdly and perhaps most worryingly for the peace process, the elections seem to have shown a consolidation of the desire for separation (materialised mainly by the Wall built between Israel and the Palestinian Territories) and lack of dialogue with the Palestinian people in determining Israel's borders. This is not a sustainable solution for those, like us, who favour negotiation.

The inward-lookingness on the part of the Israeli electorate is mirrored by the desire of Hamas to focus on internal Palestinian issues and disregard an Israel whose right to exist it anyway denies.

We cannot overlook the fact that it will have an impact on the scope for implementing the road map, whose principles remain a point of reference, but we have to tailor our discourse to the new situation.

Apart from aspects relating to the Middle East peace process, the coming to power in Palestine, in free, democratic elections, of a movement affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood represents an entirely new development.

The EU does not want on principle to see the Hamas government fail. What we want is for that government, besides respecting the Quartet's three principles, also to apply those of the rule of law, a state based on it and democratic transfer of power, and to maintain the pluralistic nature of Palestinian society. If it does so, Hamas can be regarded as a fully-fledged political entity.

Europe's position

Let me once again state the obvious, that a satisfactory solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been, is and will remain a key priority for the EU. Now, more than ever, it needs to be stressed that only a negotiated solution can prove stable and lasting.

The EU should here continue to press both sides to commit themselves to a negotiated two-state solution. It must be pointed out that, in the EU's contention, peace should be based on observance of the 1967 borders and only any territorial adjustments agreed to by both sides will be acceptable.

The EU's role in the Middle East peace process has recently seen significant growth. Suffice it to say that just a few years ago it would have been inconceivable for the EU to establish a security mission

in the occupied territories, whereas now we have two: one supporting Palestinian police reform; the other supporting the control of the Rafah border crossing. Nearly 200 000 persons have crossed from Egypt to Gaza and vice-versa since its opening last November.

One of the EU's basic aims is to get through this incipient period of uncertainty so that, when opportunities for a negotiated peace resurface, we can continue to enjoy the trust of Israelis and Palestinians.

As regards Palestine

The EU will continue to support President Abbas and the peace programme on which he was elected by an overwhelming majority of Palestinian voters.

In line with the Quartet's statement of 30 March 2006, the EU is currently reviewing its programmes of direct aid to the Palestinian Authority. Obviously, until Hamas shows unequivocal willingness to respect the international community's principles, we cannot do business as usual with the Palestinian Authority.

The EU will, however, continue its aid for the Palestinian people,

- firstly, because this is a moral imperative which the EU cannot shirk and,
- secondly, because the humanitarian crisis and instability in the occupied territories do no good to anyone, starting with Israel itself.

Another of the EU's key aims is to maintain the Palestinian Authority's institutional fabric, which we have put so much effort and money into building and whose continuity is crucial if the creation of an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state is one day to become a reality.

As regards Israel

The EU must continue to reject unilateral measures which may jeopardise the two-state solution.

The EU will keep a very close watch on developments in East Jerusalem and in the Jordan Valley, where Israel is engaging in action particularly harmful to the Palestinians, and on the construction of the separating fence.

Under international humanitarian law, Israel has a number of duties as an occupying power.

Basically, it must facilitate transport of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population. Over and above a strict interpretation of that duty, Israel must also facilitate movement in the occupied territories, so as to allow economic sustainability, without compromising the security of Israelis.

It is of the utmost urgency here for both sides to apply the access and movement agreement signed in November 2005. That agreement made it possible to open the Rafah border post, where the EU is playing and will, if both sides so wish, continue to play a very significant role. However, that agreement includes other points (transit between Gaza and the West Bank, and facilitation of movement within the West Bank) which also need to be carried out.

Another obligation is for Israel to transfer to the Palestinian Authority the revenue from customs duties and taxes which it collects on its behalf. This is Palestinian money, which cannot be withheld.

As regards the international framework, the EU's aims are to

- Continue working within the Quartet. The upholding of international legality requires the firm support of the entire community of nations, represented by the Quarter. Close coordination with the United States can make the EU's role more effective.
- Involve the Arab countries. They can and should do far more politically and economically to try and bring Hamas into the Beirut peace initiative.

We must not forget that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is part of the serious crisis which the Middle East region is undergoing. In working on the peace process, we have to bear in mind the role of States which may exert a positive but also a negative influence and the repercussions of the situation in Iraq.

Conclusion

The results of the elections in the occupied territories and in Israel have created a new situation.

The EU has to tackle it on the basis of two principles, which are contradictory only in appearance: rigour and flexibility.

- Rigour is needed in order to uphold the principles which have informed Europe's position since the 1980 Venice European Council meeting, namely respect for the rights of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, rights which should be firmly spelt out in a negotiated solution leading to the creation of an independent, sovereign, democratic Palestinian state in peaceful coexistence with Israel.
- Flexibility is needed in order to adapt to developments in reality on the ground and to support solutions bringing progress in the cause of peace.

I say now to the new Palestinian government: Hamas cannot change its past, but it can and must change its future. If it decides that there is no place in that future for terror, violence or negation of the reality of the State of Israel, the EU will be able to respond appropriately, as it has always done.



**ISTANBUL DECLARATION, PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE OIC
MEMBER STATES (PUIC), 14TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 8TH COUNCIL
AND 4TH CONFERENCE, ISTANBUL, 8-13 APRIL 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

The Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC), held its 14th Executive Committee, 8th Council and 4th Conference in Istanbul, on 8-13 April 2006, and having discussed issues topping the regional and international agenda;

[...]

- *Welcomes* the free, fair and democratic elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council held on 25 January 2006, confirms that the results of the elections won by the Hamas Movement by parliamentary majority, reflect the will of the Palestinian people. It also asserts that the new government that won the confidence of the Legislative Council is the government of the Palestinian people; therefore the PUIC rejects any blackmailing, boycott or blockade to be practiced with regard to the Palestinian people's government.
- *Denounces the threats* of the European Union and the U.S.A. to cut off assistance and aid extended to the Palestinian people and their elected Authority, considering such threats a collective punishment of the Palestinian people for their democratic option and a torpedo of fundamentals and principles on which democracy is based. It calls on the governments and peoples of the Arab and Islamic nations and all free peoples of the world to support the Palestinian people and their National Authority materially, morally, politically and media wise and to compensate them as quickly as possible for whatever assistance and aid that is cut off.
- *Strongly condemns* the continued Israeli aggression on the Palestinian people involving murder, assassinations, demolition of the Palestinian infrastructure, destruction of the Palestinian people's potential and resources, ceaseless detention campaigns and aggressive practices against Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails numbering over 10,000 detainees besides the denunciation of the continued detention of 15 elected parliamentarians, the continued expansion of settlements, building of the racist separation wall, blockading of Al Quds and the attempt to Judaize it and pull down Al Aqsa Mosque, while keeping up the siege of the Palestinian people in isolated cantons and refraining from paying Palestinian financial dues to the government. Therefore, the PUIC calls on the UN Security Council to adopt necessary measures to stop aggression on the Palestinian people, their government, and leaders.
- *Emphasizes its solidarity* with the Palestinian people in order to realize their inalienable and legitimate rights to self-determination, their right to resistance and self – defence, the right of Palestinian refugees to return and payment of compensation; release of captives and detainees from Israeli jails; establishment of the independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital; and to

treat the prisoners according to the Fourth Geneva Convention. It is of the view that the occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon is the core of the problem which leads to the continuation of the conflict in the region.

- *Given* the importance of sustained moral and material support to the Palestinian people, appeals to the international community to continue providing assistance to the Palestinians for the sake of achieving comprehensive, just and permanent settlement through negotiation based on the relevant international resolutions, concluded agreements, the plan adopted by the Arab Beirut Summit, the roadmap, and the land-for - peace principle. The PUIC urges members of the Quartet to re-effectuate their efforts in order to resume the peace process without any further delay.
- *Affirms its denunciation* of the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Occupied Syrian Golan and the Lebanese Shebaa Farms and the rest of the Lebanese territories, as well as the restriction of freedom, which threatens the security of the Lebanese citizens, and further condemns the Israeli refusal to deliver the mine maps;
- *Denounces* the Israeli daily military violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon; emphasizes the right of the Lebanese resistance to seek the completion of the liberation of the occupied parts of the Lebanese territories, and its right to confront any aggression that targets Lebanon; [...]



**RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 4TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES,
ISTANBUL, 8-13 APRIL 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

1.RESOLUTION ON PALESTINE

The Fourth Session of the Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States held in Istanbul, Turkey, (8 to 13 April 2006),

1. *Hails with pride* the Palestinian People, their elected leadership and its National Authority for their unprecedented steadfastness and their firm upholding of their national parameters and achievements under the harshest conditions created by the Israeli occupation authorities, as well as the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, considered as part of the Palestine National Council, in an atmosphere of fairness and transparency witnessed by the whole world. Prays for the souls of the brave Palestinian martyrs and wishes a speedy recovery for the wounded and total freedom for the prisoners and detainees.
2. *Strongly denounces* the escalation of the persistent aggression launched by the Israeli occupation forces as well as Israel's persistence in following a policy of arrests, demolition of houses, bulldozing of land, curtailing the movement of Palestinian people, establishing more settlements, refusal to pay Palestinian financial funds aimed at hindering the democratic process in Palestine and preventing the democratically elected government from functioning. The Conference requests the UN Security Council to take immediate action in order to halt the Israeli aggressions and compel the Israeli government to pay the financial funds which it is holding.
3. *Also strongly denounces* the burning and damaging of the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth by Jewish extremists in the framework of continuous Jewish violations of Islamic and Christian holy sites. It calls on the international community to exercise pressure on Israel in order to put an end to such violations.
4. *Denounces the threats* to cut off assistance and help to the Palestinian people and their National Authority. It considers these threats as a rejection of the options of the Palestinian people and sabotaging the foundations and principles on which genuine democracy is built. The Conference calls on the governments and peoples of the Arab and Islamic nations as well as all the honest people of the world to extend material and moral support to the Palestinian people and to compensate them for the assistance withheld from them.
5. *Stresses that successive* occupation governments have impeded, and continue to impede, the peace process by the non-implementation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy relevant to the

Palestinian – Israeli and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and their continuous violations of the legitimate and internationally recognized rights of the Palestinian people, foremost of which is the right to return, in accordance with UN Resolution 194; their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital; also Israel's persistence in the policy of dismembering and plundering Palestinian territories and natural resources; Israel's non-abidance by the decisions of the international legitimacy which affirm the illegality of building settlements and that they must be dismantled, also the illegality of building the racist Separation Wall and the necessity of its removal as well as to compensate the Palestinians who are affected by the wall in accordance with the ruling of the International Court of Justice which was ratified by the United Nations.

6. *Requests the UN, the Quartet and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to exercise pressure on the Israeli occupation government to release Palestinian and Arab detainees, including fifteen Palestinian Parliamentarians who have gained the confidence of their people but still remain under detention.*
7. *Strongly condemns the policy of the government of the Israeli occupation aimed at tightening the closure of the city of Al-Quds and separating the southern part of the West Bank from the north. It also condemns the repeated attempts of the extremists to storm Al-Aqsa Mosque and its precinct, as well as the threat to destroy it with the total collusion and cover-up of the Israeli occupation forces. Demands the occupation government to halt its excavation beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque which may lead to the collapse of the foundations of the mosque. It calls on the governments and peoples of Arab and Islamic States to shoulder their responsibilities vis-à-vis the First Qibla and Third of the Holy Mosques and not be content with denunciation and condemnation.*



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2723RD GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL MEETING, LUXEMBOURG, 10-11 APRIL 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

The Council discussed the situation of the Middle East Peace Process following the swearing in of the new Palestinian government and the result of general elections in Israel.

The Council noted with grave concern that the new Palestinian government has not committed itself to the three principles laid out by the Council and the Quartet in their statements of 30 January: non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements. It urged the new Palestinian government to meet and implement these three principles and to commit to President Abbas' platform of peace. This would further the Palestinian people's aspirations to peace and statehood.

Consistent with the Quartet statement of 30 March, the EU is reviewing its assistance to the Palestinians against the new government's commitment to the aforementioned principles. The Council recalled that the absence of such commitment will inevitably have an effect on direct assistance to that government. The EU will continue to provide necessary assistance to meet the basic needs of the Palestinian population. In this context, it also underlined the importance of improved access and movement and called on both parties to implement the 15 November 2005 Movement and Access Agreement.

The Council notes with concern the recent violent incidents in the Palestinian Territories and calls on all parties to refrain from violence and exercise self-restraint. The Council urged the Palestinian Authority to ensure security in the areas it controls, and ensure the safety of international personnel.

The Council reiterated its aim to preserve and pursue the democratic functioning and development of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority. In this context, it emphasized the central role of President Abbas as the highest representative of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO and reiterated its support for him.

The Council noted the result of the Israeli general elections. The Council underlined the importance of a strong commitment by the new Israeli government to work towards a negotiated solution of the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on existing agreements, the relevant UNSC Resolutions and the principles laid down in the Road Map. The Council called on Israel to desist from any action, such as settlement activities and the construction of the separation barrier on Palestinian land, that is contrary to international law and threatens the viability of an agreed two-state solution. The Council urged Israel to take steps to improve the humanitarian and economic situation of the Palestinians including by resuming transfers of the Palestinian tax and customs revenues withheld.

The Council welcomed the recent statement of Acting Prime Minister Olmert to seek negotiations with the Palestinians and the positive response to it by President Abbas. In this context, the Council looked forward to an early engagement between the new Israeli government and the Palestinians in order to advance a just, viable and lasting solution which would bring peace to both the Israeli and the Palestinian people.



EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER, REMARKS REGARDING THE SUSPENSION OF AID TO PALESTINIAN, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PLENARY, BRUSSELS, 26 APRIL 2006

Mr President, Honourable Members,

The election victory of Hamas in January presented the EU with an entirely new situation.

We supported the Palestinian elections and respect their outcome. But the heart of the matter is the emergence of a Palestinian Authority whose government is led by members of an organisation included in the EU terrorist list and that continues, to this day, to attempt to justify suicide bombings in Israel.

In January, the Council and the Quartet set out clear principles for continued engagement with the Palestinian Authority. I am the first to regret that the new government has so far refused to renounce violence, recognise the right of Israel to exist or accept existing agreements. These principles are the expression of a commitment to work for peace by peaceful means. They are not new: they have underpinned our cooperation with the Palestinians for many years.

As a result, the Council, meeting two weeks ago, endorsed the decision of the Commission to temporarily put on hold assistance to, or through, the Palestinian government and its ministries.

The Commission's action is a precautionary measure taken to ensure that no Community funds pass into the hands of Hamas. We have taken it pending the possible evolution of the Palestinian Authority position and a definitive decision by the Council on relations with the Palestinian Authority. It is not a definitive decision: we are currently reviewing all projects involving payments to or through the Palestinian Authority to see whether we can find alternative solutions. My services have already held a meeting with the office of Mahmoud Abbas to discuss implementing some of these projects through the Office of the President.

Honourable Members,

I want to make it very clear what this means. We have suspended payments going to the Palestinian government, but we have not suspended aid to the Palestinian people.

On the contrary: since the beginning of this year, we have stepped up our aid to the Palestinians. On 27 February, I announced a €20 million package of aid including help for the refugees, and with fuel bills. This means that we committed almost half our normal year's budget in two months. €100 million of this has already been paid, five times more than we paid for the same period in 2005.

Honourable members,

This represents an acceleration of our aid to the Palestinian people, not a suspension. The Commission is all too aware that the economic, social and humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories

is getting worse. I have seen the reports from the visit that some members made to the region in the last few days and I know you share our deep concern. We will come forward with further measures to help the population.

But we must be clear on one point: the key to preventing a humanitarian disaster in the Palestinian territories lies with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, not the international community.

I have heard some people say that Europe has been paying the salaries of the PA. This is not true. Our support to the PA budget in the past has been linked to reform. At most, it covered less than 10% of the salary bill. A real problem now is Israel withholding Palestinian customs and tax revenues. These are Palestinian taxes which people have already paid. Withholding them means that basic services won't be delivered, salaries cannot be paid, and families will suffer. Israel has also increased the closures of territory in the West Bank and into and out of Gaza. Addressing these problems will do more to help the Palestinian people than any measure the EU can take. The international community must intensify its diplomatic efforts with Israel on these two issues.

Honourable Members,

On the Palestinian side, President Abbas has a key role to play, including in negotiations with Israel, and we are looking at how we might best support his Office. But we are not in the business of establishing parallel structures. We are rather looking at the possibility with other donors of establishing an international supervision mechanism, which could facilitate the control of funds for donors to meet needs in the health and education sectors.

The Quartet meeting on 9 May is an opportunity for the international community to address this question as well as the measures Israel could take to ease the humanitarian situation.

Honourable Members,

I wish to conclude by stressing our wish to see an evolution of the positions taken by the Palestinian Authority government, not its failure. And in this way to address the contradiction between the positions currently espoused by members of the new Palestinian government (and by Hamas as an organisation) and the EU objective of a negotiated solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, with Israel living side-by-side and at peace with a future Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, CALL FOR CONVENING AN INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE TO RESOLVE THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT,
NOBEL INSTITUTE, OSLO, 26 APRIL 2006**

Ladies and gentlemen, President and members of the Nobel Institute, Dear audience, Dear friends,

I greet you all, and thank you for your invitation. I am honoured to speak before this important institute, and before personalities with an experience and interest in Middle East issues, in a country that had contributed historically by signing the first Israeli-Palestinian agreement, called the Oslo Accords, or the Declaration of Principles in Oslo. It is an agreement that would not have seen the day without the tremendous, exertive efforts, and long hours spent by a number of Norwegian officials, under the leadership of the late ex Minister of Exterior, Mr. Johan Jorgen Holst, along with Jan Egeland, Mona Juni, and the dynamic man who does not tire to achieve a goal he believes in, Mr. Terje Rod-Larsen.

I have led our negotiation's team under the supervision of the late President Mr. Yasser Arafat, which took place secretly, and that were finalized by my signature along with Shimon Peres', then Israeli Foreign Minister, during the historic celebration at the White House on 13 September 1993.

You undoubtedly remember the amount of media coverage the signature of the accords entailed, and the tremendous hope pinned by the entire world on resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which is

the base of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This was in the hopes that peace will prevail in the Middle East, with the existence of two states standing on historic Palestine, namely Israel, and Palestine, co-existing in peace and safety.

Anyone interested in reading the history of this conflict, realises that the Palestinians have offered many compromises, which would have been impossible with the absence of a courageous, transparent, Palestinian leadership. We have agreed, as per the Oslo Accords to which we are still committed, to establish our Palestinian state on 22 percent of historic Palestine's area, which includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, which were occupied by Israeli in 1967.

Since the signature of these accords, opposing negative forces have emerged from both sides. While the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) who signed the accords, remained to lead the Palestinian Authority, the opposite took place on the Israeli side. The assassination of the ex Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin, led to Binyamin Netanyahu taking office as prime minister, he was opposed and against these accords. He followed the policy of evading the application of these accords, starting with accelerating the settlement expansion on our Palestinian land, securing the siege on East Jerusalem and changing its features to isolate it from the rest of the West Bank, and passing various discriminatory legislations to compel the Palestinian citizens in the city, Muslims and Christians alike, to desert it.

In addition to that, the Palestinian economic situation has deteriorated dramatically. On the one side, obstacles were set afore the Palestinian labour force working in Israel and from the other, we lacked the proper conditions to build an economy of our own that could absorb all the labour force that has lost their jobs, mainly that we are deprived to have our own gateways to the outside world. Indeed, we do not have an airport or a seaport, and since Israel controls our borders with the neighboring Arab countries, which has relatively changed in the past year due to Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and our supervision to cooperate with the European Observers on the Rafah Crossing. The West Bank is yet a large prison, separated by tens of Israeli checkpoints, and covered by tens of settlements all over.

The lack of commitment vis-à-vis applying the accords regarding freezing settlement expansion, or the release of prisoners, or withdrawal in accordance with the set timeframes, all entailed catastrophic consequences that led us to a cycle of action and reaction. This has led to Israel abusing its force, and using the most sophisticated weapons. It has used a new technique, namely assassination via air missile strikes, killing many innocent citizens, at home or in the street. This is what I call a form of terrorism, which leads to the killing of many innocent lives, and increases hatred.

From the onset, we have condemned terrorism and violence by some Palestinian groups. It would have been possible to avoid this bloodshed, occurring during the last years, had the Israeli government accepted to cooperate with us in regards to security. Instead, it has destroyed our military apparatuses and institutions. It has acted unilaterally, with the logic of power, not the logic of dialogue, which can be classified as the Israeli unilateral policies, that are refused from our side and that include the establishment of a Palestinian state with temporary borders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is often stated, by the leaders of the world, that resolving the Palestinian Israeli conflict is the path to resolving many conflicts. Resolving this conflict would turn the Middle East into a prosperous and safe area. There would be potential for economic growth and development for the region's inhabitants, instead of the tremendous waste on arms in the region, the question is as follows: what hinders this from happening? Where is the responsibility of the international community and its bodies, and the influential countries, permanent members of the Security Council?

There is no doubt that this conflict could have ended a long time ago, had the UN resolutions, unanimously agreed upon, been applied. The resolutions include finding a just and negotiated-upon solution for the Palestinian refugees, as per UN Resolution 194. However, Israel, as it is well known, behaves as being above the international law. It has and still puts conditions on the potential interna-

tional party playing the role of a relative broker, even when that broker is the United States of America, that provides Israel with all kinds of support, and has used its right of veto tens of times defending Israel, to hinder any resolution that might condemn its acts.

I do not wish to expose tens of attempts and initiative, we have in front of us now, the plan for the international Road Map, which became a UN resolution 1515. This plan includes all conditions that provide possibilities to resolve the conflict, to which your Minister of Exterior has contributed largely. We have announced our immediate approval on the Road Map, since it was presented to the late President Arafat, whereas Prime Minister Sharon expressed fourteen reservations on it.

I believe that to resolve the conflict, both sides should not be left alone with this imbalance of occupier and occupied. An international conference should be summoned immediately, in which direct negotiations take place, on the basis of international UN resolutions and signed agreements. The international group, whether it is the Quartet, or any other international frame work, would play the role of the broker and arbitrator at the same time.

The international community needs to move fast: Israel's unilateral measures through which it strife to impose its vision and expansionist map by building the discrimination separation Wall, Judaizing Jerusalem, expatriating Palestinian land, including the Jordan Valley- would lead to a practical annexation of more than 85 percent of the West Bank to Israel, putting their hands on Palestinian artesian water resources, and transforming our lands into isolated cantons with no geographic contiguity, including eliminating any chance to establish a viable, independent Palestinian state.

Thus, and as Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and as elected President of the Palestinian National Authority, I am ready to immediately resume negotiations with the Israeli government. It is important for me to clarify that the Palestinian Legislative elections, which brought Hamas to power, is not an obstacle in front of negotiations. Negotiations are still the PLO's mandate which signed all previous agreements with Israel.

Ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,

We yearn towards establishing a Palestinian state that epitomizes our people's rights to self-determination. It would be a haven for stability and safety, true democratic practice, living in harmony, peace and good neighbourhood, with mutual confidence and respect, with all the region's countries and people including Israel. We would like it to be a peaceful state, exerting its efforts to build the human being, ensuring sustainable human development, putting on its priorities human values as endorsed by the United Nations. We do not wish, nor do we have the ability, to establish a state with military power. We yearn towards establishing institutions as per the highest international humanitarian standards, protecting the citizen, and respecting the law and its sovereignty. We wish to dedicate all our available financial resources to build educational and cultural institutions, along with infrastructure that contributes in achieving welfare, prosperity and progress to our people, and increasing our standards of living. We wish for a security force that can protect our international commitments and pledges. To reach to this end, the occupation should end, settlers should evacuate beyond the June 4, 1967 borders.

Based on the above, we call upon the international community in general, and upon Europe too, at the individual level of each state and collectively in the frame of the European Union, to continue to provide various forms of moral and financial support, to enable us to achieve our goals in reaching peace in the area, and making it a success.

In Palestine and the Arab world in general, we wish for a better understanding with Europe, an understanding occurring between neighbours who live in a changing world where globalisation has erased all borders.

I refuse the concept of the clash of civilizations, and I also refuse the concept of the clash of religions. I support the Spanish initiative regarding coalition among civilizations, and I support the Vatican's and Islamic Conference outcomes regarding inter-faith dialogues.

It is necessary to expand the circles of dialogue, communication, and to deepen the knowledge of one another, to defeat extremism politically, religiously, or racially.

Despite all the difficulties, I look optimistically towards the future.

I have deep faith that the majority of Palestinians and Israelis wish peace. Indeed, there is no military solution to this conflict, and we have no choice but to coexist side by side, on this holy land, land of the three monotheistic religions. Let us make Jerusalem, as we dreamed, the capital of two states, Palestine and Israel, open to all believers who can exercise their freedom of worship.

Thank you for your attention, and I hope that this dream becomes a reality.



ISRAELI CABINET, DECISION TO APPROVE CHANGES IN THE SECURITY FENCE ROUTE, JERUSALEM, 30 APRIL 2006 [EXCERPTS]

Interim PM Olmert's remarks at the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting:

"Today we will discuss several changes to the route of the security fence in the north, center, Jerusalem area and south. The changes are very important and we are committed to making a supreme effort to complete the security fence everywhere as quickly as possible. We must move forward. The decisions we make today will enable us, in the vital areas, to complete building the fence very quickly and to thus improve our counter-terrorist abilities, as occurred in recent weeks, on the assumption that we will have to deal with this problem in the future as well."

At the weekly Cabinet meeting today (Sunday), 30 April 2006:

1. In continuation of its previous decisions, the Cabinet views the continued construction of the security fence as important vis-à-vis a measure that has proven its efficiency in protecting the State of Israel and its citizens and that prevents negative influences that terrorist attacks are liable to have on the diplomatic process while reducing, by as much as possible, the effects on Palestinians' lives in keeping with High Court of Justice rulings.

Therefore, the Cabinet decided:

- To approve the continued construction of the security fence in order to prevent terrorist attacks, in keeping with the route changes that were presented today;
- The sections of fence that are built as a result of this decision, like those sections of that have been built up to now, are a temporary security measure for the prevention of terrorist attacks and do not express a diplomatic - or any other kind of - border;
- During the detailed planning, every effort will be made to reduce, by as much as possible, disturbances that are liable to be caused to Palestinians' lives as a result of the construction of the fence;
- Local changes in the route, or construction, of the fence that are required as a result of overall planning or security needs, or as a result of the need to reduce disturbances to Palestinians' lives, will be submitted for approval to the Defense Minister and the Prime Minister;
- The approval of those sections of the fence route that are still undergoing legal review (in northern Samaria and northeast of Maaleh Adumim) will be subject to legal approval.

Revised route of the Security Fence

2. The Cabinet discussed the issue of security responsibility for the 'Jerusalem envelope' and for the seam zone. [...]



**US CHRISTIAN LEADERS, LETTER TO US PRESIDENT BUSH,
PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT ABBAS AND ISRAELI PM-ELECT OLMERT,
URGING IMMEDIATE ACTION TO RESTORE HOPE FOR PEACE, 2 MAY 2006**

[The letter - coordinated by Churches for Middle East Peace and the heads of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches and organizations - raised concerns about the pending humanitarian crisis, violence, the establishment of a mutually negotiated border, and the status of Jerusalem.]

Dear President Bush, President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert,

We write to you as leaders of churches and church-related organizations from the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions that work together in Churches for Middle East Peace.

With a sense of great urgency, we appeal to you to take immediate actions that can restore hope for peace between the state of Israel and the future state of Palestine. With anguish, we recognize the tremendous grief, anger, suffering and fear felt by both the Israeli and Palestinian people. With alarm, we observe the growing danger that this unresolved conflict brings to the people of the United States as anti-American sentiment is fueled by the continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. With hope, we ask for your intervention in four areas of deep concern: the pending humanitarian crisis, the cessation of violence, the establishment of a mutually negotiated border between Israel and the future Palestine, and the status of Jerusalem.

The looming humanitarian crisis among the Palestinian people is our most immediate concern. We have heard reports from a recent Churches for Middle East Peace delegation to Jerusalem and the West Bank and from staff of humanitarian and development agencies that the cut-off of aid to the Palestinian Authority and the strict limitations on aid going through NGOs poses a threat of massive dimensions. We ask each of you to adopt policies and take actions that provide both space and opportunity for the newly elected Hamas government to make positive changes, while finding mechanisms that allow financial assistance to reach the Palestinian people immediately.

President Abbas, we encourage you to maintain your persistent commitment to peacemaking and nonviolence. We were deeply grieved by the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on April 17 and alarmed by Hamas officials statements condoning this terrible act of violence. We urge you and the Palestinian people to remain steadfast in pursuit of peace and to press the officials of Hamas to accept previous agreements regarding Israel and to renounce violence.

Prime Minister Olmert, we commend you for declaring that under your leadership Israel will withdraw from additional occupied land and dismantle some settlements in the West Bank. Such actions, undertaken in consultation with the Palestinians, could be important moves forward in Israel's compliance with UNSC Res. 242, which continues to be the internationally accepted legal basis for resolution of the conflict. We also urge you to end the practice of targeted assassinations and incursions into Palestinian areas.

President Bush, your vision of a two-state solution that provides for a viable state of Palestine living in peace alongside a secure and internationally recognized state of Israel remains our goal - a goal that is shared by the majority of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, according to polling data. Yet, steps are being taken by both governments that make this solution increasingly difficult. As you continue to press Hamas to change, we ask you to remain diligent about changes being made by Israel on the ground. We applaud your statements, and those of Secretary of State Rice, that no one should try to unilaterally predetermine the outcome of final status agreement and encourage Prime Minister Olmert to heed your words.

It is extremely important that decisions on the final status issues of borders, Jewish settlements, refugees, water and the sovereignty of Jerusalem be agreed upon in the context of negotiations and with the strong leadership of the United States in cooperation with the Quartet and the Arab League. We believe that in you, President Abbas, the Israelis do have a partner with whom to negotiate. That is the only means by which the outcomes will be viewed as legitimate and conducive to a durable peace between Israel and its neighbors. Prime Minister Olmert, if you choose to unilaterally disengage from portions of the West

Bank and the environs of East Jerusalem, we urge you to publicly declare that the withdrawal lines are not permanent borders and that those will be determined in negotiations with the Palestinians.

Similarly, we ask for Prime Minister Olmert's assurance that the separation barrier is only temporary, and that its route, where it extends beyond the Green Line, is not a permanent border. The separation barrier is having a tremendously negative impact, both psychologically and economically, on the Palestinians and on the potential of a viable Palestinian state. While the separation barrier may prevent some terrorist attacks, we believe Israel's security lies ultimately in a negotiated end of the occupation that is accepted by the United Nations as the fulfillment of Security Council resolutions and is consistent with the requirements of the Geneva Conventions.

Churches for Middle East Peace has long advocated the sharing of Jerusalem by the two peoples and the three faiths. The severing of Bethlehem and other parts of the West Bank from East Jerusalem by means of the separation barrier and restrictive residency and other laws is extremely troubling. It is no longer possible for the vast majority of Palestinian Muslims and Christians in the West Bank and Gaza to worship at their holy sites and to have access to Jerusalem-based institutions. We believe that a negotiated solution for Jerusalem, that takes into account the profound dimensions of the Holy City for Jews, Christians, and Muslims globally, is the key to Middle East peace and the eventual reconciliation of the Abrahamic family.

President Bush, President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert, you alone are capable of reawakening your peoples to the promise of peace. Our urgent appeal to you is witness to the great numbers of people of the Christian tradition, in the United States and globally, who pray for peace and for your strength and courage to be peacemakers.

Sincerely,

Bishop Vicken Aykazian, Legate, Armenian Orthodox Church
 Bishop Dimitrios Couchell, Ecumenical Officer, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
 Dr. Robb Davis, Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee
 Marie Dennis, Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
 The Rev. Robert Edgar, General Secretary, National Council of Churches USA
 The Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary, Reformed Church in America
 The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church, USA
 The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 The Rev. Dr. Stan Hastey, Executive Director, Alliance of Baptists
 Fr. Dominic Izzo, OP President Conference of Major Superiors of Mens Institutes
 The Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church, (USA)
 The Rev. John McCullough, Executive Director & CEO, Church World Service
 Mary Ellen McNish, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee
 Metropolitan PHILIP Saliba, Archbishop of NY and Metropolitan of North America, Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of N. America
 Bro. Mark Schroeder, OFM, President, Franciscan Friars (English Speaking Conference, JPIC Council)
 The Rev. William G. Sinkford, President, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
 The Rev. John H. Thomas, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ
 Joe Volk, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation
 The Rev. Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
 James Winkler, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church



**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT, ADDRESS TO THE KNESSET,
JERUSALEM, 4 MAY 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

On April 6, 2006, the President assigned me the task of forming the Government. At the conclusion of the coalition negotiations, conducted with wisdom and responsibility by teams from the various parties, agreements were signed and the new Government's basic guidelines were drafted - they are now before you.

Yesterday, the State of Israel celebrated its 58th Independence Day. How great is the difference between the situation that the people of Israel were in on May 14, 1948 and our situation today. At the time of the Declaration of the Establishment of the State we stood, only three years after the Holocaust, with our backs to the wall. With meager resources and weaponry, we stood in a desperate military defensive against an invasion, whose declared purpose was the eradication of the newly born state. We were but a step away from extinction. The pages of history of the State of Israel since then are full of heroism, sacrifice, magnificent creation, construction, settlement, massive immigration absorption and a free and enlightened democratic government. The cycle of hostility around us, the war and terrorism, bereavement and pain, did not cease for one minute and did not stop the bursting vitality and the progress and prosperity of the State of Israel. This miracle is unprecedented in the history of nations.

From its birth, the State of Israel advocated two founding bases - the Jewish base and the democratic base: the supreme value of a "Jewish state", at the same time with the uncompromising demand that the democratic state of Israel will provide "complete social and political equality to all its citizens, regardless of religion, race or gender". These two bases embody the core values of the renewed Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel. If you take one and disconnect it from the state, it is as if you cut off its lifeline.

Therefore, those wishing to look directly into our past, see the reality of our lives and look to the future, must do so with both eyes open - the Jewish eye and the democratic eye. Only then, with both eyes open, do the colors of Israeli society come together into one clear, vivid and meaningful picture.

I, like many others, also dreamed and yearned that we would be able to keep the entire land of Israel, and that the day would never come when we would have to relinquish parts of our land. Only those who have the land of Israel burning in their souls know the pain of relinquishing and parting with the land of our forefathers. I personally continue to advocate the idea of the entire land of Israel as a heart's desire. I believe with all my heart in the people of Israel's eternal historic right to the entire land of Israel. However, dreams and recognition of this right do not constitute a political program. Even if the Jewish eye cries, and even if our hearts are broken, we must preserve the essence. We must preserve a stable and solid Jewish majority in our State.

Therefore, we must focus on the area in which a Jewish majority is secured and ensured. The disengagement from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria was an essential first step in this direction, but the main part is still ahead. The continued dispersed settlement throughout Judea and Samaria creates an inseparable mixture of populations which will endanger the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. It is those who believe, as I do, in Jabotinsky's teachings and in full civil equality between Jews and Arabs, who must understand that partition of the land for the purpose of guaranteeing a Jewish majority is the lifeline of Zionism. I know how hard it is, especially for the settlers and those faithful to Eretz Yisrael, but I am convinced, with all my heart, that it is necessary and that we must do it with dialogue, internal reconciliation and broad consensus.

This does not mean that the settlement enterprise was entirely in vain. On the contrary. The achievements of the settlement movement in its major centers will forever be an inseparable part of the sovereign State of Israel, with Jerusalem as our united capital. Let us come together around this consensus and turn it into a uniting political and moral fact.

The strength of this nation is in its unity. I will not help those wishing to cause a rift among the sectors of our nation. It is my intention to take all future steps through continuous dialogue with the wonderful settlers in Judea and Samaria. We are brothers and we will remain brothers.

From this podium, I again address the elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas. The Government of Israel under my leadership prefers negotiations with a Palestinian Authority committed to the principles of the Roadmap, which fights terror, dismantles terrorist organizations, abides by the rules of democracy and upholds, practically and thoroughly, all agreements which have thus far been signed with the State of Israel. Negotiation with such an Authority is the most stable and desired basis for the political process, which can lead to an agreement which will bring peace. This is what we desire.

The guidelines of this Government propose this. The parliamentary majority which will back the Government policy is committed to this process. These conditions cannot be blurred. We will not, under any circumstances, relinquish these demands as a basis for negotiation.

The Palestinian Authority must make fundamental changes in its patterns of behavior, its reactions and its commitments to the principles which are the basis for any future negotiations.

A Palestinian government led by terrorist factions will not be a partner for negotiation, and we will not have any practical or day-to-day relations.

The State of Israel is prepared to wait for this necessary change in the Palestinian Authority. We will closely follow the conduct of the Authority. We will continue to strike at terror and terrorists. We will not hesitate to reach terrorists, their dispatchers and operators anywhere - I repeat - anywhere, but we will give the Authority an opportunity to prove that it is aware of its responsibilities and willing to change.

That said, we will not wait forever. The State of Israel does not want, nor can it suspend the fateful decisions regarding its future - until the Palestinian Authority succeeds in implementing the commitments it undertook in the past. If we reach the conclusion that the Authority is dawdling and is not planning to engage in serious, substantial and fair negotiation - we will act in other ways.

We will also act without an agreement with the Palestinians to create an understanding which will, first and foremost, be founded on a correct definition of the desired borders for the State of Israel.

These borders must be defensible, and ensure a solid Jewish majority. The Security Fence will be adjusted to the borders formulated east and west. The operational range of the security forces will not be limited, and will be in accordance with the security reality with which we have to deal.

The State of Israel will invest its resources in areas, which will be an organic part of it. The borders of Israel, which will be defined in the coming years will be significantly different from the areas controlled by the State of Israel today.

This is the Government's plan, it is the basis for its existence, it is the commitment made to the Israeli electorate whose trust we asked for - and received.

The agreement to which we aspire to shape the Middle East is based on consensus, broad consensus first and foremost within ourselves, and thereafter with our friends around the world.

No political process, certainly not one as fundamentally decisive and comprehensive as the one for which we are preparing, can be realized without the understanding of many officials in the international community. We have no intention of acting alone. We will consult, discuss, talk, and I am certain that we will reach understandings which will create a broad base of international backing for these steps, first and foremost with our ally and close friend, the United States led by President George Bush, and also with our friends in Europe.

Israel strives to improve the understandings and agreements with the countries of Europe. Today's European leaders better understand the complexity of the situation in the Middle East. They understand that there are no simple solutions, certainly given the upswing in fundamentalist religious fa-

naticism in various countries in the Middle East, and the ascendancy of the pro-Iranian Hamas to the Palestinian Authority. We will deepen dialogue with Europe and strive to include its leaders in the dialogue process with the United States.

I aspire to deepen the ties with Arab countries. Egypt and Jordan, countries with which we have peaceful relations, have leaders who are inspirational. President Mubarak and King Abdullah the Second are welcome, credible and responsible partners - for those goals which I defined. I will do all that I can so that our relations with Egypt and the Jordanian Kingdom will continue to strengthen, and serve as a basis for diplomatic and open relations with additional Arab countries.

The threat emanating from Iran is casting a heavy pall over the entire region and is endangering world peace. The pursuit by this rogue and terror-sponsoring regime of nuclear weapons is currently the most dangerous global development, and the international community must do its utmost to stop it. The statements by the President of Iran should not be taken lightly - he means what he says. The State of Israel, which is targeted for destruction by the evil leaders of Tehran, is not helpless. However, only a decisive and uncompromising international stand against Iran's goals can eliminate this threat to world peace.

For thousands of years, the life of the Jewish people has been an unending struggle for its right to exist. Exactly 58 years ago, we realized the generations-long dream of our people, here in this beautiful land, which is unlike any other. We established the State of Israel, and earned the privilege of sovereignty over our lives in our land.

Now, the responsibility to ensure its future has been bestowed on us. I wish my colleagues in the Government which I head and myself that we will be deserving of this great privilege granted us, that we will be wise, responsible and brave enough to know how make it secure, and protect it from those who wish it harm, that we will know how to maintain proper dimensions and necessary balances to strengthen the hope which beats in so many hearts, and to bring joy, peace and security to our country and its citizens.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, NEW YORK, 9 MAY 2006

Representatives of the Quartet - U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in New York to discuss the situation in the Middle East. The Quartet also met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdelelah al-Khatib, and Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal to exchange views on regional issues.

The Quartet expressed its appreciation for the service of James Wolfensohn as Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, and noted his central role in the conclusion of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the promulgation of an agenda for Palestinian economic recovery.

The Quartet underscored its continued commitment to the principles of partnership and negotiation leading to a two-state solution, as embodied in the Roadmap. A lack of action by the parties in certain key areas has stalled progress on the Roadmap. The Quartet underscored the need for both parties to avoid actions which could prejudice final status issues or undermine progress toward this goal.

The Quartet reiterated its grave concern that the Palestinian Authority government has so far failed to commit itself to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. The Quartet noted the absence of a commitment to these principles has inevitably impacted direct assistance to that government and expressed its deep concern about the consequences for the Palestinian people. The donor members noted their willingness to work toward the restoration of international assistance to the Palestinian Authority government once it has committed to these principles.

The Quartet discussed the current situation in Israel and the West Bank, and Gaza. It condemned the Palestinian Authority government's failure to take action against terrorism and the justification of the April 17 suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. The Quartet urged it to act decisively against terrorism and bring an end to violence. The Quartet noted that President Abbas condemned the April 17 attack as he has consistently condemned all acts of terrorism in the past.

The Quartet expressed its concern over Israeli military operations that result in the loss of innocent life. The Quartet calls for restraint and asks Israel to bear in mind the potential consequences of its actions for the population. The Quartet expressed its concern about settlement expansion. It continues to note with concern the route of the barrier, particularly as it results in the confiscation of Palestinian land and cuts off the movement of people and goods. The Quartet, reiterated the importance of both parties avoiding unilateral measures which prejudice final status issues.

The Quartet discussed the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza. It expressed serious concern about deteriorating conditions, particularly in Gaza. The Quartet expressed concern about delivery of humanitarian assistance, economic life, social cohesion, and Palestinian institutions. The Quartet reiterated its support for assistance directed to help meet the basic human needs of the Palestinian people and promotion of Palestinian democracy and civil society, and called upon the international community to respond urgently to assistance requests by international organizations, especially UN agencies, active in the West Bank and Gaza. The Quartet urged both parties to take concrete steps to implement their obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access.

Recalling its commitment of January 30 that it is mindful of the needs of the Palestinian people, the Quartet expressed its willingness to endorse a temporary international mechanism that is limited in scope and duration, operates with full transparency and accountability, and ensures direct delivery of assistance to the Palestinian people. If these criteria can be met, the operation of the temporary international mechanism should begin as soon as possible and be reviewed after three months to determine whether it should continue. The Quartet welcomed the offer of the European Union to develop and propose such a mechanism. It invites other donors and international organizations to consider participation in such a mechanism. It urged Israel in parallel to take steps to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. The Quartet reiterates that the Palestinian Authority government must fulfill its responsibilities with respect to basic human needs, including health services, as well as for proper fiscal management and provision of services.

The Quartet welcomed Prime Minister Olmert's call for negotiations with a Palestinian partner committed to the principles of the Roadmap, as the most stable and desired basis for the political process. The Quartet welcomed President Abbas' continued commitment to a platform of peace. The Quartet is encouraged by these statements of intent.

Finally, the Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to its previous statements and to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement to the conflict based upon UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515. The Quartet will remain seized of the matter.



**NATIONAL CONCILIATION DOCUMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN PRISONERS
(ORIGINAL VERSION), 11 MAY 2006**

[The document was adopted by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, including members of the Hamas and Fateh, in spring 2006, as a basis for conciliation between the rival factions. It was subsequently ratified by the Hamas and PLO/Fateh after revision (see document dated 28 June 2006 below)].

*In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful,
"Abide by the decree of God and never disperse" (a verse from the Holy Qur'an)*

Based on a high sense of national and historical responsibility, and owing to the dangers facing our people and for the sake of reinforcing and consolidating the Palestinian internal front and protection of national unity and the unity of our people in the homeland and in the Diaspora, and in order to confront the Israeli scheme that aims to impose the Israeli solution which shatters the dream of our people and the right of our people in establishing their independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty; this scheme that the Israeli government intends to impale in the next phase as establishment of the erection and completion of the apartheid wall and the Judaization of the Jerusalem and the expansion of the Israeli settlements and the seizure of the Jordan Valley and the annexation of vast areas of the West Bank and blocking the path in front of our people to exercise their right in return.

In order to maintain the accomplishments of our people achieved in long struggle path and in loyalty to the martyrs of our great people and the pains of their prisoners and the agony of their injured, and based on the fact that we are still passing through a liberation phase with nationalism and democracy as the basic features, and this imposes a political struggle strategy that meets with these features and in order to make the Palestinian comprehensive national dialogue succeed, and based on the Cairo Declaration and the urgent need for unity and solidarity, we present this document (the national conciliation document) to our great steadfast people and to President Mahmoud Abbas Abu Mazen and to the PLO Leadership and to the PM Ismail Hanieh and to the Council of Ministers and to the Speaker of the PNC and to the members of the PNC and to the Speaker and members of the PLC and to all Palestinian forces and factions and to all nongovernmental and popular organizations and institutions and to leadership of Palestinian public opinion in the homeland and in the Diaspora.

Hoping to consider this document as one whole package and with the hope to see this document get unanimous support and approval and that it can contribute to reach a Palestinian national conciliation document.

1. The Palestinian people in the homeland and in the Diaspora seek to liberate their land and to achieve their right in freedom, return and independence and to exercise their right in self determination, including the right to establish their independent state with al-Quds al-Shareef as its capital on all territories occupied in 1967 and to secure the right of return for the refugees and to liberate all prisoners and detainees based on the historical right of our people on the land of the fathers and grandfathers and based on the UN Charter and the international law and international legitimacy.
2. To work quickly on achieving what has been agreed upon in Cairo in March 2005 pertaining to the development and activation of the PLO and the joining of Hamas and Islamic Jihad Movements to the PLO which is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people wherever they are located and in a manner that meets with changes on the Palestinian arena according to democratic principles and to consolidate the fact that the PLO is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people in a manner that reinforces the capacity of the PLO to assume its responsibilities in leading our people in the homeland and in the Diaspora and in mobilizing the people and in defending their national, political and humanitarian rights in the various fora and circles and in the international and regional arenas and based on the fact that the national interest stipulates the formation of a new Palestinian National Council before the end of 2006 in a manner that secures the representation of all Palestinian national and Islamic forces, factions and parties and all concentrations of our people everywhere and the various sectors and the figures on proportional basis in representation and presence and struggle and political, social and popular effectiveness and to maintain the PLO as a broad front and framework and a comprehensive national coalition and a gathering framework for all the Palestinians in the homeland and in the Diaspora and to be the higher political reference.
3. The right of the Palestinian people in resistance and clinging to the option of resistance with the various means and focusing the resistance in the occupied territories of 1967 alongside with the political action and negotiations and diplomatic action and continuation of popular and mass resistance against the occupation in its various forms and policies and making sure there is broad participation by all sectors and masses in the popular resistance.

4. To set up a Palestinian plan towards comprehensive political action and to unify the Palestinian political rhetoric on the basis of the Palestinian national consensus program and Arab legitimacy and the international legitimacy resolutions that grant justice to the Palestinian people who are represented by the PLO and the PNA as president and government, and the national and Islamic factions and the civil society organizations and the public figures in order to mobilize Arab, Islamic and international political and financial and economic and humanitarian support and solidarity to our people and to our PNA and to support the right of our people in self determination and freedom and return and independence and to confront the plan of Israel in imposing the Israeli solution on our people and to confront the oppressive siege on the Palestinian people.
5. To protect and reinforce the PNA since it is the nucleus of the future state; this PNA which was established by the struggle and sacrifices, blood and pain of the Palestinian people and to stress on the fact the higher national interests stipulates respecting the temporary constitution of the PNA and the effective laws and respecting the responsibilities and authorities of the president elected according to the will of the Palestinian people through free, honest and democratic elections and to respect the responsibilities and authorities of the government that was granted the confidence vote by the PLC.

And the importance and the need for creative cooperation between the presidency and the government and joint work and hold regular meetings between them to settle any disputes that might arise through brotherly dialogue based on the temporary constitution and for the sake of the higher interests and the need to hold a comprehensive reform in the PNA institutions, especially the judicial apparatus and the respect of the judiciary authority at all levels and to implement its decisions and to reinforce the rule of the law.

6. To form a national unity government on a basis that secures the participation of all parliament blocs, especially Fatah and Hamas and the political forces that desire to participate on the basis of this document and the joint program to upgrade the Palestinian situation at the local, Arab, regional and international levels and to confront the challenges through having a strong national government that enjoys Palestinian popular and political support from all forces and to present the best possible care for the sectors that carried the burden of steadfastness and resistance and the Intifada and who were the victims of the Israeli criminal aggression, especially the families of the martyrs, prisoners and injured and the owners of the demolished homes and properties which were destroyed by the occupation, in addition to the care to the unemployed and the graduates.
7. Administration of the negotiations is the jurisdiction of the PLO and the President of the PNA on the basis of clinging to the Palestinian national goals and to achieve these goals on condition that any final agreement must be presented to the new PNC for ratification or to hold a general referendum wherever it is possible.
8. To liberate the prisoners and detainees is a sacred national duty that must be assumed by all Palestinian national and Islamic forces and factions and the PLO and the PNA as President and government and the PLC and all resistance forces.
9. The need to double efforts to support and care for the refugees and defend their rights and work on holding a popular conference representing the refugees which should come up with commissions to follow up its duties and to stress on the right of return and to cling to this right and to call on the international community to implement Resolution 194 which stipulates the right of the refugees to return and to be compensated.
10. To work on forming a unified resistance front under the name "Palestinian resistance front" to lead and engage in resistance against the occupation and to unify and coordinate action and resistance and to form a unified political reference for the front.
11. To cling to the democratic trend and to hold regular general free and honest and democratic elections according to the law for the president and the PLC and the local and municipal councils and to respect the principle of peaceful and smooth transfer of authority and to promise to protect the Palestinian democratic experience and respect the democratic choice and its results and respect the rule of the law and the public and basic freedoms and freedom of the press and equality among the

citizens in rights and duties without any discrimination and to protect the achievements of women and develop and reinforce them.

12. To reject and denounce the oppressive siege against the Palestinian people which is being led by the US and Israel and call on the Arabs at the popular and official levels to support the Palestinian people and the PLO and the PNA and to call on the Arab governments to implement the political, financial, economic, and media decisions of the Arab summits that support the Palestinian people and their steadfastness and their national cause and to stress that the PNA is committed to the Arab consensus and to joint Arab action.
13. To call on the Palestinian people for unity and solidarity and unifying the ranks and support the PLO and the PNA as president and government and to reinforce steadfastness and resistance in face of the aggression and siege and to reject intervention in the Palestinian internal affairs.
14. To denounce all forms of split that can lead to internal conflicts and to condemn the use of weapons regardless of the reasons in settling internal disputes and to ban the use of weapons among the members of the Palestinian people and to stress on the sanctity of the Palestinian blood and to abide by dialogue as the sole means to solve disagreements and freedom of expression through all media, including the opposition to the authority and its decisions on the basis of the law and the right of peaceful protest and to organize marches and demonstrations and sit ins on condition that they be peaceful and without any arms and not to attack the properties of citizens and public property.
15. The national interest stipulates the need to look for the best means towards the continuation of participation of the Palestinian people and their political forces in Gaza Strip in their new situation in the battle for freedom, return and independence and to liberate the West Bank and Jerusalem in a manner that makes the steadfast Gaza Strip a real support force to steadfastness and resistance of our people in the West Bank and Jerusalem as the national interest stipulates reassessing the struggle methods to seek the best methods to resist occupation.
16. The need to reform the develop the Palestinian security institution with all its branches on a modern basis and in a manner that makes them capable of assuming their tasks in defending the homeland and the citizens and in confronting the aggression and the occupation and to maintain security and public order and implement the laws and end the state of chaos and security chaos and end the forms of public armed presence and parades and confiscation of the chaotic weapons that harm the resistance and distort its image and that threaten the unity of the Palestinian society and the need to coordinate and organize the relation with the forces of resistance and organize and protect their weapons.
17. To call on the PLC to continue to issue laws that organize the work of the security institution and apparatuses with their various branches and work on issuing a law that bans exercise of political and partisan action by the members of the security services and to abide by the elected political reference as defined by the law.
18. To work on expanding the role and presence of the international solidarity committees and the peace loving groups that support our people in their just struggle against the occupation, settlements, the apartheid wall politically and locally and to work towards the implementation of the International Court of Justice decision at The Hague pertaining to the removal of the wall and settlements and their illegitimate presence.

Signed by:

Fatah – PLC member Marwan Barghouthi, Fatah Secretary
Hamas – Sheikh Abdul Khaleq al-Natsheh – Higher Leading Commission
Islamic Jihad Movement – Sheikh Bassam al-Sa'di
PFLP – Abdul Rahim Mallouh – member of PLO Executive Committee and Deputy
General Secretary of the PFLP
DFLP – Mustafa Badarneh
Note: Islamic Jihad expressed reservations on the item pertaining to the negotiations



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS,
2728TH EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 15 MAY 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council assessed the situation in the Middle East and welcomed the statement of the Quartet Principals on 9 May in New York.
2. The Council expressed its serious concern about the deterioration of the humanitarian, economic and financial situation in the West Bank and Gaza.
3. The Council welcomed the willingness of the Quartet to endorse a temporary international mechanism, the objective of which is direct delivery and supervision of assistance to the Palestinian people. The EU is working urgently to develop such a mechanism, which as a matter of priority will be aimed at contributing to meet basic needs including health services. It will consult International Financial Institutions and other key partners, and invite other donors to actively join in the effort to establish the mechanism as soon as possible.
4. The Council recalled its demand to the Palestinian Authority government to meet and implement the three principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap.
5. The Council urged both parties to take concrete steps to implement their obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access.
6. The Council urged Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues, which are essential in averting a crisis in the Palestinian territories.
7. In line with their declared intentions and recalling President Abbas' commitment to a platform of peace, the Council called for an early engagement between the Israeli Prime Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority in view of the urgent need to relaunch the process towards a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict leading to an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. In this regard, the Council reiterated the importance of both parties avoiding unilateral measures, which prejudice final status issues. Ministers recalled previous statements that the EU will not recognise any change to pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties.
8. The Council commended the services of James Wolfensohn as Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement and his central role in the conclusion of the Agreement on Movement and Access as well as his promulgation of an agenda for Palestinian economic recovery.



**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL, 16TH EU-GCC JOINT
COUNCIL AND MINISTERIAL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 15 MAY 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

6.1 Regional issues

6.1.1. Developments in the Middle East

The EU and the GCC reaffirmed their support for the Roadmap and called on the parties to implement it. They confirmed their shared position that they would not recognise any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties and that no declared views on the possible shape of a final settlement could pre-empt its negotiation. They expressed their support for the Statements adopted by the Quartet at its meetings on 30 January, 30 March and 9 May.

The two sides warmly welcomed the recently expressed willingness by the Quartet to endorse a temporary international mechanism to ensure direct delivery of assistance to the Palestinian people. The two sides called on donors and international organisations to participate in such a mechanism.

They noted with concern the recent violent events in Israel and the Palestinian Territories which undermine chances for a peaceful settlement. They condemned all acts of terror and violence and called on all parties to exercise self-restraint.

They called on all states in the region to exert every effort to promote peace and to combat terrorism in all its forms.

The EU and the GCC stated that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace must meet the legitimate aspirations of both the Israeli and Palestinian people and must include Lebanon and Syria. They also called on all States in the region to exert every effort to promote peace and to combat terrorism in all its forms.

The EU and the GCC reiterated their support for Lebanon's unity, stability, independence, and sovereignty. They welcomed the launching of the national dialogue and its initial agreements in respect of the relevant UNSC resolutions.

They encouraged the continuation of the dialogue and hoped it will contribute to political stability in the country by addressing critical issues of national concern.

The EU and the GCC underlined the importance of full implementation of UNSCR 1595, 1636, 1644, 1664, the Taif Accord and the third semi-annual report of 18 April by the UN Secretary General on progress made in implementing UNSCR 1559 and the need for all parties to cooperate.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH BEFORE THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, STRASBOURG, 16 MAY 2006**

[In his speech, Abbas asked the international community to act immediately in order to prevent the Middle East from sliding into an abyss and a new cycle of conflict.]

Mr. President, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Allow me first to express my gratitude for the invitation I received to address this assembly, an assembly that embodies a unique success story for the nations of the European continent, a story with numerous lessons for many nations.

Mr. President, Ladies & Gentlemen,

When I speak to you today, I convey the message of the Palestinian people to representatives of nations in a continent with whom we share a permanent neighborhood on the shores of an old sea, and a history of continued, varied and interlinked relationships. We also share common objectives for a future of strengthened relations built across the waters of the Mediterranean with bridges that will promote cooperation and partnership in various fields, for innovative and fruitful interactions, and for a fertile dialogue between ancient civilizations that gives greater importance to human values, rejects extreme and racist notions and stereotypes, strengthens our historical neighbourhood and contributes to the creation of peace, prosperity and progress in the region and the global community.

As I speak to you today, I realise that I address legislators who closely look at our problems, many of whom have witnessed the plight of the Palestinian people during visits to our country. Only yesterday, the Palestinian people commemorated the 58th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba in 1948, which represented the historical injustice when we the Palestinian people, were uprooted from our land, our society was destroyed, most of us were displaced and became refugees, and our firm national rights were denied.

Throughout the political course and national struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994 in the aftermath of signing the Declaration of Principles, the desire for a major, effective and active European role has always been a fundamental pillar in Palestinian policy and diplomacy.

Our people have not forgotten the positive positions numerous European countries have taken since the early 1970's in support of the Palestinian people's rights and its national liberation movement led by the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Our people have not forgotten European countries' generous political, financial and technical support in building Palestinian institutions and a national body, and in confronting the consequences of the policies of occupation, besiegement and destruction. This support has strengthened our people's confidence in the justice of our cause and in international law. At this moment, as another difficult moment is open to dangerous possibilities, we seek and await for a leading European role.

Mr. President, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Our search for peace has been continuing for decades. Despite the horror of the historical injustice inflicted upon our people, we were able to formulate a realistic policy to restore the rights of our people to self-determination.

At early stages, European capitals were places where secret and public meetings between PLO officials and Israeli activists from the peace camp took place. It was a European capital, Oslo, that hosted the first official contacts between the PLO and the Israeli government and the initial signature of the first agreement in history between the two sides in 1993 before its official signing in Washington that same year.

When the Palestine National Council approved in 1988 the Palestinian peace initiative and accepted United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, it offered an opportunity to achieve a historical reconciliation. I must honestly say that this was not easy for our people. But as a leadership, and I recall here the role of our historical leader Yasser Arafat, we possessed the courage to put forward a peace formula that enjoyed the support of our people on the basis of establishing a Palestinian state on 22% of the land of historical Palestine, which represents the land occupied by Israel in 1967.

Following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, we continued our intensive search for peace. We repeatedly emphasised that the core of the process must be based on the principle of "partnership", a partnership committed to agreements and to the resolution of problems imposed by a legacy of a long, bitter and bloody conflict, a partnership that understands the legitimate concerns of the other and lays the foundations for a new and different future between Palestinians and Israelis.

The severest blow to the peace process, which was supposed to have reached its final stages within a few short years, was handled by the Israeli rejection of the logic of partnership and its insistence on practicing destructive policies, specifically of building settlements, constructing walls and confiscating land to create facts on the ground that prejudice the outcome of negotiations.

The abandonment of commitments and agreements and the rejection of international patronage have become a main feature of Israel's policy, and have resulted in the peace process' loss of momentum and the shaking of peoples' belief in its utility. This policy has developed in recent years to the level of attempting to completely destroy the Palestinian National Authority and its institutions, and to the systematic destruction of our basic infrastructure, which your countries contributed to developing.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies,

For our part, and despite the state of frustration and suffering of a size and severity I trust you realise and appreciate - those of you who have witnessed it closely - we were careful not to allow our national struggle to be diverted from its course and to protect its conformity with international law. We rejected and condemned all attacks against civilians and rejected terrorism in all its forms. We emphasised the importance of sanctifying a culture of peace, and the peaceful and popular nature of resisting occupation.

Mr. President, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Sixteen months ago, the occupied Palestinian territory observed presidential elections after the death of late President Arafat, in which I ran with a clear platform: to declare a truce and emphasize adherence to negotiations as a way to resolve the conflict, to adopt a policy of reform in various fields, to strengthen democratic performance, to achieve a period of calm (*Tahdia*), to foster security, and to promote the rule of law.

I am proud that the Palestinian people greatly entrusted me. Our work started immediately, with the agreement of all groups and factions, on a *Tahdia* that provided for the first time in years an almost complete halt in armed attacks by Palestinians. But our Israeli counterpart responded with the continued construction of the apartheid wall in the West Bank that divides our territories into scattered cantons, with continued assassinations, arrests and military incursions in our towns, villages and refugee camps, with tightened and suffocating sieges, and with the rejection of agreements and understandings, including the understanding reached in Sharm al-Sheikh after the presidential elections.

And in spite of all this, we engaged Israel's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, ensured its smooth and calm implementation, and proved our ability to assume our own security responsibilities, especially in the border areas where monitors from the European Union assist us to ensure the proper functioning of the first border crossing in history that is fully administered by Palestinians.

The Israeli policy to reject our extended hand to negotiate and give peace a chance increased the frustration of our people. Israel's policy has also exacerbated the deteriorating economic conditions and made movement between one town and another long and dangerous because of checkpoints spread throughout Jerusalem and the West Bank. These checkpoints oppress and humiliate individuals who only want to lead normal lives, reach their places of work and their fields, travel to their hospitals and universities, take their children to schools or go to mosques and churches. The frustration created by the practices of the Israeli occupation and the absence of a positive outlook for the peace process formed the background for the legislative elections that took place last January.

The entire world witnessed how the transfer of power was smoothly implemented, and how we established the foundations and the tradition of a democratic process that we have no choice but to follow. We emphasise again that democracy remains without soul in the absence of people's freedom and the continued occupation. Over the past four months, we have been going through an unprecedented situation. The declared platform of the party that won the elections and formed the government does not conform to my platform and the commitments and prior agreements of the Palestinian Authority.

Our approach to dealing with this situation rests on the same concepts that led us to carry out elections on time. We are addressing this problem inside our institutions and in accordance with our laws and regulations. The good political activity in the Palestine during the past few months is gradually producing a public opinion that emphasises respect for the agreements and commitments of the Palestinian Authority, and commitments to international law. I have asked the new government to amend its platform in order to conform to these commitments. We are in a continued dialogue that will take us to an expanded national dialogue in a few days. I hope that this will lead us to the required process of amendment.

Our approach needs the support of the international community. The new government must be given the chance to adapt to the basic requirements of the international community. Stopping assistance to the Palestinian Authority will exacerbate the deteriorating economic and social conditions, and will weaken the network of efficient and working government ministries, administrations and institutions that the countries of the European Union have played a vital role in building and developing. Here I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Quartet for its latest decision to resume providing assistance to the Palestinian people on the basis of a mechanism, which will be developed by the EU.

Mr. President, Ladies & Gentlemen,

The Israeli government is yet again repeating the slogan of "no Palestinian partner". You remember that they used this slogan in the past as an excuse to abandon agreements and to refuse to return to the negotiating table.

We are gravely concerned for the future of peace in our region as we hear about Israeli projects that aim to draw the final borders of Israel inside the occupied Palestinian territory. These projects will foreclose the possibility of implementing the two-state solution by annexing large portions of the occupied Palestinian territory and render that which remains of it into scattered islands that lack geographical contiguity and vital water resources. The attempt to implement these unilateral projects will

destroy any remaining hope to revive the peace process. It will also lead to another bitter era of tension and conflict for which peoples in this region have, for decades, paid a heavy price.

The claim that there is no Palestinian partner has no basis. I reiterate that, based on the constitutional power granted to me by our basic law which entrusts negotiation responsibility in the hands of the PLO Executive Committee, its Chairman and its Negotiations Affairs Department, we remain fully committed to return immediately to the negotiating table to reach an agreement that ends this long conflict. When I spoke to Mr. Ehud Olmert by phone to congratulate him on taking office a few days ago, I stressed our true desire to immediately return to the negotiating table.

We ask that the international community act immediately in order to prevent the region from sliding into an abyss and a new cycle of conflict that will negatively impact the region and the world as a whole at a moment when our region is experiencing other tensions. Such action would be based on international law, the Road Map and in the adoption of negotiations between partners as an alternative to the policy of unilateralism, diktat and the negation of the other. Such action would draw its justification and necessity from values that unify people in our region, such as the yearning for freedom, peace, development and modernization that we also share with the people of Europe.

Mr. President, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I once again thank you for this invitation and your hospitality. I believe that I have just spoken before friends who share with us the dedication to promote the values of freedom, democracy, tolerance and dialogue. I am confident that you will continue to support the just cause of the Palestinian people until we gain our freedom and build an independent state in the Holy Land. - Thank you.



**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
STATEMENT ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE: 'THE TIME IS RIPE TO DO
WHAT IS RIGHT,' GENEVA, 19 MAY 2006**

With the responsible powers and authorities providing little prospect of a viable future for both Israelis and Palestinians, with concern rising around the world at the recent course of events in the conflict, and with various peace plans and numerous UN resolutions languishing unimplemented, *the World Council of Churches Executive Committee, meeting in Geneva, 16-19 May, 2006*, comes to a sober conclusion: Peace must come soon or it may not come to either people for a long time.

Failure to comply with international law and consequences thereof has pushed the situation on the ground up to a point of no return. The disparities are appalling. One side is positioning itself to unilaterally establish final borders on territory that belongs to the other side; the other side is increasingly confined to the scattered enclaves that remain. On one side there is control of more and more land and water; on the other there are more and more families deprived of land and livelihoods. On one side as many people as possible are being housed on occupied land; on the other side the toll mounts of refugees without homes or land. One side controls Jerusalem, a city shared by two peoples and three world religions; the other - Muslim and Christian - watches its demographic, commercial and religious presence wither in Jerusalem. From both sides, military forces or armed groups strike across the 1967 borders and kill innocent civilians. On both sides, authorities countenance such attacks.

Finally, the side set to keep its unlawful gains is garnering support from part of the international community. The side that, despairing at those unlawful gains, used legitimate elections to choose new leaders is being isolated and punished.

All parties to the conflict and the foreign powers implicated in it now face a world dangerously divided over this conflict, a world increasingly convinced that the goal of peace for all has been traded away for gains by one side.

At this critical juncture the contribution of churches can be to speak from the perspective of ethics. The actions noted above and others like them cannot be justified morally, legally or even politically.

Late in the long civil rights struggle in the U.S., Dr. Martin Luther King wrote:

“[T]ime...can be used destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people. ... We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.” [‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’ 1965]

The same hard diagnosis applies to the struggle for a just and durable peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Impunity toward international law, the United Nations Charter, resolutions of the UN Security Council and rulings of the International Court of Justice has long characterized actions on the ground. Now the same phenomenon is apparent in international policies toward the conflict as well. Legal norms that bear so heavily on this conflict - territorial integrity, the peaceful resolution of conflict, the right to self-determination and the right to self-defence, among others - are being more widely ignored.

Calls for the application of these norms anchor six decades of church policy toward the conflict, including WCC Statements on ‘The Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel’s Annexation of Palestinian Territory’ (2004), ‘The Ecumenical Response to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict’ (2002 and 2001), ‘Jerusalem Final Status Negotiations’ (2000), ‘The Status of Jerusalem’ (1998), ‘The Middle East’ (1993, 1983, 1974, 1969, 1968 and 1967), ‘Jerusalem’ (1980, 1975 and 1974), and ‘The Emergence of Israel as a State’ (1948). One theme stands out: “What we desire is equal justice for both Palestinian people and Jewish people in the Middle East,” (WCC Executive Committee, Bad Saarow, GDR, 1974), but international law has not been conclusively applied for the collective good.

Most recently, the WCC has requested the Middle East ‘Quartet’ to give the new Palestine authorities time to develop and demonstrate their policies. The WCC also called Quartet members - the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations - to exercise even-handedness when dealing with the conflict and be the determined and objective third party needed to bring Israeli and Palestinian authorities into equitable negotiations.

Respect for existing agreements is required of both sides. Democracy must be protected where it is taking root. The use of violence pre-empts normal bilateral relations for Israeli as well as Palestinian authorities.

Ending double standards is a prerequisite for peace. The current impasse must be broken. All parties must see the necessity and human benefit in re-aligning current political decisions with long-standing legal commitments and undeniable moral obligations. The precious, life-saving opportunity is now.

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Bossey, Switzerland, 16-19 May 2006:

Urges the international community to establish contact and engage with all the legitimately elected leaders of the Palestinian people for the resolution of differences, and not to isolate them or cause additional suffering among their people;

Strongly supports, and calls the international community to support, two-way and equitable negotiations as the path to mutual recognition between Israel and Palestine and to the resolution of other contentious and substantive obstacles to peace as noted in the succession of United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Recommends that, in the interests of equitable treatment and as a new foundation for peace, both parties to the conflict be held to one and the same standard for ending violence, meeting their existing agreements and recognizing each other’s existence including the 1967 borders.

Insists that all High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention (including Israel, the U.S., States of the European Union, Russia, and the repository state, Switzerland) ensure the well-being of the occupied population. Urgent actions include ending the punitive measures imposed on the Palestinian people in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and its prohibition of collective punishment - including the tax, aid and travel restrictions imposed after their recent democratic elections - and requiring the occupying power to fulfil its responsibilities for the well-being of the population in all areas it controls, including the Gaza Strip.

Reminds the United Nations and its member states of UN responsibility to make Jerusalem an open and inclusive city for the two peoples and three religions, shared in terms of sovereignty and citizenship.

Encourages the government of Israel to base its security on peace with all its neighbours, including the equitable negotiation of final borders with those neighbours and excluding the unilateral imposition of borders on those neighbours.

Encourages the Palestinian Authority to include parties across the political spectrum in the processes of democracy and of non-violent conflict resolution, to protect the democratic rights of its people from external pressures as legitimate rights under international law, to maintain the existing one-party cease-fire toward Israel and extend it to cover all parties, and to demonstrate that all forms of violence and attacks across the 1967 borders between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories against innocent civilians on either side must stop.

Calls member churches and the WCC to share solidarity with people on both sides of the conflict as a witness for peace:

- *Advocate* for the measures indicated above, reflecting world-wide church concern at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the implications of the conflict in different regions, and the ever more urgent need for remedial actions by the responsible authorities; use legitimate forms of pressure to promote a just peace and to end unlawful activities by Israelis or Palestinians.
- *Find constructive ways to address* threats experienced among the Jewish people, including the nature, prevalence and impact of racism in local, national and international contexts.
- *Heed calls for help* from the churches of Jerusalem at this time of trial, assist them in their service to society and support church aid work with people in need; seek help from churches in the Middle East to educate churches elsewhere about the conflict, the region and the path to peace; pray for peace.
- *Send church members* to Israel and Palestine as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel until the occupation ends.
- *Engage in dialogue with churches* that link current events in the Middle East with certain Biblical prophecies. Such dialogue would include concrete and legitimate political perspectives on justice, the impact of such linkages on the presence and witness of the Christian churches of the region, and discussions about the nature of Christian witness for peace in the Middle East.
- *Work to enhance the security of all* people in the region, in accordance with the WCC Ninth Assembly Minute, by urging relevant governments to support the establishment in the Middle East of a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone to include Israel and Iran.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH BEFORE THE WORLD
ECONOMIC FORUM, SHARM EL-SHEIKH, 21 MAY 2006**

H.E. President Hosni Mubarak, Mr. President. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen distinguish guests:

Thank you for your kind invitation, and I am honoured to speak to you today at this highly respected forum which became a gathering for international Leaders searching for development, progress and cooperation in all economic fields leading to a positive impact on security, peace and stability in the region and the world at large.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I realise what goes in your minds about the Palestinian situation, and I address you once again, with hope that paralysis and melancholy will not prevail, and you will not follow a policy of the possible

instead of the needed. It is you who found solutions to the most difficult international and economic crises when you knew what is needed to resolve these crises and confronted challenges with prudence and sharpness until the needed has been accomplished although it might have appeared impossible for many.

Despite all the political changes and financial crises, there is one constant and that is that the Palestinian people simply seek freedom - real liberation - on 22% of what remained of our land. A compelling majority of Palestinians accepts Israel's right to exist on the remaining 78%.

What is necessary is to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land, and hence I introduced my political platform that was the basis of my Presidential election campaign. This program included recognition of the State of Israel, recognition of the principle of two states and the establishment of Palestine and Israel on the borders of 4 June 1967, it also included rejection of violence and the pursuit of resolving the conflict with Israel through peaceful means and through the peace process that leads to implementing the Road Map as a whole in order to end the Israeli occupation which began in 1967.

This political platform came as a continuation of the historical decision of our people in 1988 when the Palestine National Council adopted the Palestinian peace initiative and adopted Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and presented an opportunity to accomplish a historical reconciliation.

These principles did not change even following the most sever blows to the peace process, primarily settlement construction, Wall construction and land confiscation to create facts on the ground that prejudice the results of negotiations. This platform did not change because it is the historical choice of the Palestinian people at home and in exile. I re-affirmed it in the assignment letter to the Prime Minister from the Hamas party.

I stressed before him that the government's political guidelines are the principle of two states, acceptance of the Road Map, rejection of violence and participation in the peace process. But moving from opposition to authority requires big changes that take some time. Today, the government is only seven weeks old, and it is my view that it should be given a chance to adopt the historical choice of the Palestinian people. I will continue to exert every effort with the government in order for it to accept the platform that was the basis of its assignment.

For this reason, I will lead the Palestinian National Dialogue with the government participation due on the 25th of this month, with the objective of unifying our goal that aims to achieve the two states solution and our people legitimate rights through peaceful negotiations.

At the same time, I consider that cutting aid and collective punishments will not contribute to the democratic process of the internal Palestinian dialogue, and will not create the appropriate atmosphere that allows the new government to adopt the platform according to the letter of assignment, and will definitely lead to a humanitarian catastrophe that will affect all sections of the Palestinian people.

The balance here lies in the continuation of international aid to our people, and at the same time continuation of every possible effort towards the government to accept the platform in the assignment letter which is based on international and Arab legitimacy and Palestinian Authority previous commitments. In addition, Israel's seizure of the Palestinian clearance revenue collected in Israeli ports and withholding it from the Palestinian Treasury, will not contribute to political solutions.

This action is against all international agreements and international law and takes away from the teacher, the doctor and the policeman their livelihood and the food of their children.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I called upon the new Israeli government to avoid the path of unilateral actions, construction of walls and settlements, incursions, assassinations, arrests, siege, closure and the imposition of facts on the ground, especially regarding the city of Jerusalem. These policies and practices led during the past decades to expanding the cycle of violence, to chaos, extremism and bloodshed.

Few days ago, I called the Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Ehud Olmert and congratulated him on successfully forming his new coalition government. I also congratulate Mrs. Tzipi Livni on gaining confidence as a deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign affairs. I expressed to Mr. Olmert my desire to resume partnership with him for the sake of peace. We have no choice but to resume a meaningful peace process that leads to the implementation of the Road Map. The only way we have is a real peace process that leads to ending the occupation and ending conflict on the basis of implementation of the relevant resolutions of international legality addressing to all the issues reserved for permanent status negotiations as stipulated in Oslo Accords (Jerusalem, settlements, borders, refugees and water) and many other issues of common interest.

Some may say how can you resume negotiations with the existence of a Palestinian government that does not recognise Israel? I say that I will continue to exert every possible effort to obtain the agreement of the Palestinian government to my political platform, especially regarding the political solution to the conflict and negotiations to establish two states.

On the other hand, the political negotiations with the Israeli government are the historical choice of the Palestinian people and are the responsibility and the jurisdiction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation which executive committee I head. Negotiations will take place through the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO. The Palestinian government will not object to this and will not create obstacles before these talks.

On my part, I committed to put the results we reach in negotiations to a general referendum. Peace is not merely the signature of leaders, it will need the approval of the people, and hence came the idea of a general referendum.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I hope that the new Israeli government will abandon the slogan of "no partner", and accept our invitation to return to the negotiating table. The drawing of the final borders cannot happen through dictations, but rather in the negotiations. Providing security, peace and fulfilling commitments will not be achieved by walls and military solutions. It can only be achieved through a comprehensive and a just political solution, and through the implementation of the Road Map according to an agreed timetable.

This requires creative economic solution, provide real freedom for trade, investment, free passage and genuine economic that can take us toward the future.

Unilateralism is a tempting mirage that tempts the exhausted and bitter with such illusions that seem like solutions because they are the easy and the possible thing to happen, and not what is needed to solve the conflict and involves effort. Unilateralism tempts with the false claim of more security for the two people at a time when our basic human rights are violated and when it puts us in a suffocating misery and prisons that become increasingly smaller. Unilateralism falsely promises us "permanent" arrangements impossible without resolving any of the main issues of conflict: security, borders, Jerusalem and refugees. Unilateralism cannot put an end to occupation, end to the conflict and end to claims. On the contrary unilateralism will quickly put an end to the two-state solution and will increase violence.

Therefore, this is the choice that we face today. Are we, Palestinians, Israelis and international community, ruling out the possibility of peace for the future generations in the Middle East by accepting what is not sustainable? Or will we make and choose an opportunity for real peace in the region. Will we succumb to a vicious paralysis or choose to rise above the shackles of ideology or our own shortsightedness and do what we all know is needed and necessary to be done? If we now allow the two-state solution to die, we will be limiting and destroying the dreams of our grandchildren for tomorrow.

It is time to end occupation and conflict in the holy land. I know that this is the aim and objective of the vast majority of the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples and all peoples in the area and worldwide, in order to live in peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Once again, I thank you for this invitation. I believe that I spoke to friends and partners who share with us the values of freedom, democracy, peace, stability and dialogue. I trust that we will continue to work together to achieve a historical peace treaty between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

At the end I hope successful results for this forum, and I would to express my deepest gratitude to Egypt and for my brother President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak for his unwavering commitment to achieve a historic, lasting, comprehensive and just solution that will guarantee the establishment of a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel. I also express my thanks and appreciations to Professor Claus Schwab President of World Economic Forum for this opportunity. - Thank you.



**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT, ADDRESS TO A JOINT SESSION
OF THE US CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, DC, 24 MAY 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Distinguished Members of the US Congress, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the people and the State of Israel, I wish to express my profound gratitude to you for the privilege of addressing this Joint Meeting of the US Congress. This building, this chamber, and all of you stand as a testament to the enduring principles of liberty and democracy.

The United States is a superpower whose influence reaches across oceans and beyond borders. Your continued support, which, I am happy to say, transcends partisan affiliations, is of paramount importance to us. We revere the principles and values represented by your great country, and are grateful for the unwavering support and friendship we have received from the US Congress, from President George W. Bush and from the American people.

Distinguished members of Congress, I come here - to this home of liberty and democracy - to tell you that my parents' dream, our dream, has only been partly fulfilled. We have succeeded in building a Jewish democratic homeland. We have succeeded in creating an oasis of hope and opportunity in a troubled region. But there has not been one year - one week - even one day - of peace in our tortured land.

Our Israeli pioneers suffered and their struggle was long and hard. Yet even today, almost 60 years after our independence, that struggle still endures. Since the birth of the State of Israel and until this very moment, we have been continually at war and amidst confrontation. The confrontation has become even more violent, the enemy turned even more inhumane due to the scourge of suicide terrorism. But we are not alone. Today, Israel, America, Europe, and democracies across the globe, unfortunately, face this enemy.

Our countries do not just share the experience and pain of terrorism. We share the commitment and resolve to confront the brutal terrorists that took these innocent people from us. We share the commitment to extract from our grief a renewed dedication to providing our people with a better future.

Let me state this as clearly as I can: we will NOT yield to terror, we will NOT surrender to terror and we WILL WIN the war on terror and restore peace to our societies.

The Palestinian Authority is ruled by Hamas - an organization committed to vehement anti-Semitism, the glorification of terror and the total destruction of Israel. As long as these are their guiding principles, they can never be a partner.

Therefore, while Israel works to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population are met, we can never capitulate to terrorists or terrorism. I pay tribute to the firmness and the clarity with which the President and this Congress uphold this crucial principle, which we both firmly share.

Israel commends this Congress for initiating the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act which sends a firm clear message that the United States of America will not tolerate terrorism in any form. Like America, Israel

seeks to rid itself of the horrors of terrorism. Israel yearns for peace and security. Israel is determined to take responsibility for its own future and take concrete steps to turn its dreams into reality. The painful but necessary process of Disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria was an essential step.

At this moment, my thoughts turn especially to the great leader, who, in normal circumstances, should have stood here. Ariel Sharon, the legendary statesman and visionary, my friend and colleague, could not be here with us but I am emboldened by the promise of continuing his mission. I pray, as I am sure you all do too, for his recovery. Ariel Sharon is a man of few words and great principles. His vision and dream of peace and security transcended time, philosophy and politics.

Israel must still meet the momentous challenge of guaranteeing the future of Israel as a democratic state with a Jewish majority, within permanent and defensible borders and a united Jerusalem as its capital - that is open and accessible for the worship of all religions. This was the dream to which Ariel Sharon was loyally committed. This was the mission he began to fulfill. It is the goal and the purpose of the Kadima party that he founded and to which I was the first to join. And it is this legacy of liberty, identity and security that I embrace. It is what I am working towards. It is what I am so passionately hoping for.

Although our government has changed, Israel's goal remains the same. As Prime Minister Sharon clearly stated: "The Palestinians will forever be our neighbors. They are an inseparable part of this land, as are we. Israel has no desire to rule over them, nor to oppress them. They too have a right for freedom and national aspirations."

With the vision of Ariel Sharon guiding my actions, from this podium today, I extend my hand in peace to Mahmoud Abbas, elected President of the Palestinian Authority. On behalf of the State of Israel, we are willing to negotiate with a Palestinian Authority. This authority must renounce terrorism, dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, accept previous agreements and commitments, and recognize the right of Israel to exist.

Let us be clear: peace, without security, will bring neither peace nor security. We will not, we cannot, compromise on these basic tests of partnership.

With a genuine Palestinian partner for peace, I believe we can reach an agreement on all the issues that divide us. Our past experience shows us it is possible to bridge the differences between our two peoples. I believe this - I KNOW THIS - because we have done it before, in our peace treaties with Egypt and with Jordan. These treaties involved painful and difficult compromises. It required Israel to take real risks.

But if there is to be a just, fair and lasting peace, we need a partner who rejects violence and who values life more than death. We need a partner that affirms in action, not just in words, the rejection, prevention and elimination of terror.

Peace with Egypt became possible only after President Anwar Sadat came to our Knesset and declared: "No more war, no more bloodshed." And peace with Jordan became possible only after the late King Hussein, here in Washington, declared the end of the state of belligerency, signed a peace treaty with us, and wholeheartedly acknowledged Israel's right to exist.

The lesson for the Palestinian people is clear. In a few years they could be living in a Palestinian state, side by side in peace and security with Israel. A Palestinian State which Israel and the international community would help thrive. But no one can make this happen for them if they refuse to make it happen for themselves.

We have to compromise in the name of peace, to give up parts of our promised land in which every hill and every valley is saturated with Jewish history and in which our heroes are buried. We have to relinquish part of our dream to leave room for the dream of others, so that all of us can enjoy a better future. For this painful but necessary task my government was elected. And to this I am fully committed.

We hope and pray that our Palestinian neighbors will also awaken. We hope they will make the crucial distinction between implementing visions that can inspire us to build a better reality, and mirages that will only lead us further into the darkness. We hope and pray for this, because no peace is more stable than one reached out of mutual understanding not just for the past but for the future.

The key to a true lasting peace in the Middle East is in the education of the next generation. So let us today call out to all peoples of the Middle East: replace the culture of hate with an outlook of hope.

It is three years since the Roadmap for Peace was presented. The Roadmap was and remains the right plan. A Palestinian leadership that fulfils its commitments and obligations will find us a willing partner in peace. But if they refuse, we will not give a terrorist regime a veto over progress, or allow it to take hope hostage.

We cannot wait for the Palestinians forever. Our deepest wish is to build a better future for our region, hand in hand with a Palestinian partner, but if not, we will move forward, but not alone. We could never have implemented the Disengagement plan without your firm support. The Disengagement could never have happened without the commitments set out by President Bush in his letter of April 14, 2004, endorsed by both houses of Congress in unprecedented majorities. In the name of the People of Israel, I thank President Bush for his commitment and for his support and friendship.

The next step is even more vital to our future and to the prospects of finally bringing peace to the Middle East. Success will only be possible with America as an active participant, leading the support of our friends in Europe and across the world. Should we realize that the bilateral track with the Palestinians is of no consequence, should the Palestinians ignore our outstretched hand for peace, Israel will seek other alternatives to promote our future and the prospects of hope in the Middle East. At that juncture, the time for realignment will occur.

Realignment would be a process to allow Israel to build its future without being held hostage to Palestinian terrorist activities. Realignment would significantly reduce the friction between Israelis and Palestinians and prevent much of the conflict between our two battered nations. The goal is to break the chains that have tangled our two peoples in unrelenting violence for far too many generations. With our futures, unbound peace and stability might finally find its way to the doorsteps of this troubled region.

We believe that peace, based on mutual respect, must be and is attainable in the near future. We, as Jews and citizens of Israel, believe that our Palestinian neighbors want to live in peace. We believe that they have the desire, and hopefully the courage, to reject violence and hatred as means to attain national independence.

God bless you and God bless America. Thank you.



**UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS,
LETTER TO THE US SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS REGARDING
THE PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006, 25 MAY 2006**

The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to express the bishops' concerns regarding S. 2370, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006. The Conference's perspective on this legislation is shaped by two overriding concerns.

First, S. 2370 should be measured in light of the ultimate goal of promoting a two-state solution that provides security for Israel and a viable state for the Palestinians, two states living alongside one another in peace. Second, the legislation should provide for the urgent needs of the Palestinian people. A further deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation of the Palestinian people compromises human dignity and puts at risk the long-term welfare of both Palestinians and Israelis who long for a just peace.

Mr. Chairman, the Bishops' Conference is grateful that this legislation acknowledges the goal of a two-state solution and incorporates some significant improvements over its companion bill in the House (HR 4681), but we remain deeply concerned that some of the provisions of the legislation would undermine the goal of a two-state solution.

The Conference of Bishops' relief and development agency, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), reports that their assistance programs in the Palestinian Territories could be severely curtailed and a number of programs ended under the proposed legislation. We understand that other reputable Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) report similar concerns. It is not in the best interests of either Israelis or Palestinians for desperation to grow in the West Bank and Gaza. Instead S. 2370 should send a message that Congress supports a wide range of basic assistance programs to the Palestinian people.

Compared to the House, the Senate has a less restrictive definition of assistance that can be provided by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to the Palestinian people in section 3 of the bill. However, we remain concerned that S. 2370 needs specifically to define a broader range of essential assistance including, but not limited to, food, water, medical services, sanitation services, education, job training, psycho-social counseling, agricultural development, and other assistance to meet basic human needs. Especially given the deepening poverty and unemployment in the Palestinian territories, the exception ought to explicitly mention or describe a broader range of services to meet "basic human needs."

S. 2370 rightly calls upon Hamas to renounce terrorism, recognize Israel and accept prior agreements, but then sections 5 and 6 discourage contact with all officials of the Palestinian Authority (except for President Abbas and his personal representatives), "including the Palestinian Legislative Council," despite the fact that many members of the Council are not members of Hamas or another Foreign Terrorist Organization. In addition, the denial of visas to and the travel restrictions on representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the United States, even if discretionary, are particularly counterproductive as the PLO is on record as having renounced terrorism, recognized Israel and negotiated prior agreements, and Hamas is not a member of the PLO. These actions discourage contact with Palestinian leaders whose support is crucial for pursuing a two-state solution.

Finally, it is important that the certification described in Section 620K(b), which is the basis for all of the bill's restrictions, should focus on essential reform requirements for the Palestinian Authority. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority ought to be pressured to recognize Israel, renounce terrorism and dismantle terrorist infrastructures, and accept previous agreements with Israel; but S. 2370 goes far beyond the Quartet's demands of January 30. Good governance is always a worthy goal, but a laundry list of conditions beyond these essential ones may simply delay and impede a negotiated two-state solution.

The Bishops' Conference asks that S. 2370 be modified to meet two important goals – to support a two-state solution to the conflict and to alleviate the urgent human needs of the Palestinian people. These goals are in the best interests of both Palestinians and Israelis who long for a just peace.

Sincerely yours,

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Bishop of Orlando, Chairman, Committee on International Policy

CC: Members of Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Mitch McConnell



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN OF THE SUMMIT OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM), ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI, MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NAM COORDINATING BUREAU, PUTRAJAYA, 29 MAY 2006 [EXCERPTS]

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by extending to you a warm welcome to Malaysia and to Putrajaya for this ministerial meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement. I trust that in the next two days you will have a fruitful exchange of views on issues of importance to the movement, within the framework of the theme of this ministerial meeting, which is “towards a more dynamic and cohesive NAM: challenges of the 21st century”. [...]

Ladies and gentlemen,

19. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains one of the most profound tragedies of our time. The so-called “peace process” now lies in tatters. We continue to witness the brutal occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel, and the appalling daily sufferings of the inhabitants living under foreign occupation – all in the name of ensuring security for Israelis, including those who stay illegally on Arab lands. It is patently clear to all that there will be no solution to the conflict unless the legitimate aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fulfilled. Peace cannot be built on the continued occupations of other people’s lands. Peace cannot come unless the Palestinians are free to exercise their human and political rights, including rights to economic activity. The problem must be resolved justly, morally and in accordance with international law, UN Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and other relevant U.N resolutions, with both Palestinians and Israelis having their own state within secure borders. But first, the Palestinians must be saved from severe deprivations following the current action by donors to stop the flow of aid to Palestine.
20. It is imperative that the members of the international quartet fulfil their obligations to ensure the full implementation of their road map for peace in the Middle East. As “honest brokers”, they must not support any unilateral measure taken by one party to the conflict at the expense of the other.
21. The international community must respect the choice of the Palestinian people who had exercised their democratic right and free will by handing victory to Hamas in the recent elections. Support for democracy should be manifested consistently, not selectively or preferentially. The leadership of Hamas must be engaged through contacts and dialogue, not shunned or ostracised and sanctioned. Certainly, the denial of the much-needed international aid to the hapless Palestinian people is unconscionable and likely to be counter-productive to an early solution to the conflict.
22. The parties to the conflict must also make a sober and realistic assessment of the current situation and make serious efforts towards peace and reconciliation. They must eschew the path of violent conflict for one of dialogue and conciliation. Hope must be restored on both sides, particularly the Palestinians who are on the point of utter despair after two generations of endless suffering. Clearly, the United Nations, especially the security council, has a crucial role and responsibility in the resolution of this problem and must be more pro-active, rather than merely reactive, in dealing with the issue.

Ladies and gentlemen,

23. The situation in Afghanistan is also a matter of grave concern to the international community. Only a strong central authority would be able to ensure the future peace, stability and prosperity of the long-suffering Afghan people. Much more resources need to be made available to Afghanistan before it could stand on its own feet. Afghanistan cannot forever be propped up by a foreign military presence.
24. The situation in Iraq, in Palestine and in Afghanistan, once resolved, will have a defining effect on the fight against terrorism and indeed on the slide in the relations between the west and the Islamic world as a whole.



**MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI, SPEECH
ON THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT AT THE OPENING OF THE
NAM'S MINISTERIAL MEETING, PUTRAJAYA, 29 MAY 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains one of the most profound tragedies of our time. The so-called "peace process" now lies in tatters. We continue to witness the brutal occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel, and the appalling daily sufferings of the inhabitants living under foreign occupation - all in the name of ensuring security for Israelis, including those who stay illegally on Arab lands.

It is patently clear to all that there will be no solution to the conflict unless the legitimate aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fulfilled. Peace cannot be built on the continued occupation of other people's lands. Peace cannot come unless the Palestinians are free to exercise their human and political rights, including rights to economic activity. The problem must be resolved justly, morally and in accordance with international law, UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and other relevant U.N resolutions, with both Palestinians and Israelis having their own state within secure borders. But first, the Palestinians must be saved from severe deprivations following the current action by donors to stop the flow of aid to Palestine.

It is imperative that the members of the International Quartet fulfil their obligations to ensure the full implementation of their road map for peace in the Middle East. As "honest brokers", they must not support any unilateral measure taken by one party to the conflict at the expense of the other.

The international community must respect the choice of the Palestinian people who had exercised their democratic right and free will by handing victory to Hamas in the recent elections. Support for democracy should be manifested consistently, not selectively or preferentially. The leadership of Hamas must be engaged through contacts and dialogue, not shunned or ostracised and sanctioned. Certainly, the denial of the much-needed international aid to the hapless Palestinian people is unconscionable and likely to be counter-productive to an early solution to the conflict.

The parties to the conflict must also make a sober and realistic assessment of the current situation and make serious efforts towards peace and reconciliation. They must eschew the path of violent conflict for one of dialogue and conciliation. Hope must be restored on both sides, particularly the Palestinians who are on the point of utter despair after two generations of endless suffering. Clearly, the United Nations, especially the Security Council, has a crucial role and responsibility in the resolution of this problem and must be more pro-active, rather than merely reactive, in dealing with the issue.



**CLOSING STATEMENT, PALESTINIAN NATIONAL DIALOGUE
CONFERENCE, RAMALLAH AND GAZA, 30 MAY 2006**

[The sessions were held at the Presidential Headquarters in Ramallah and at Al-Shawwa Center in Gaza on 25-26 May 2006, attended by the PNC Secretary, the PLC Speaker, Pres. Abbas, PM Haniyeh, former prisoner Ahmad Abul Sukkar (presenting the national conciliation document – see 11 May above -, representatives of all forces, factions, the private sector, and the civil society.]

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful

First: The sanctity of Palestinian blood

There are no contradictions between our people and their resistance groups. The national dialogue conference stresses that all interpretations and disputed issues must be solved through democratic dialogue and in an atmosphere embodying the national spirit of our people. There can be no use of arms among the people of the same cause. Palestinian blood is sacred and we are all forbidden from

wrongly shedding one drop of Palestinian blood in light of our struggle against the enemy, which is occupying our lands and displacing our people.

The conference rejects any internal fighting, which will benefit no one save our enemy. The national dialogue conference calls for a national code of honor among the forces and factions to ban all forms of infighting regardless of any possible reasons or justifications. It also stresses that political debate among national ranks at the table should be endorsed for the benefit of our people and not through weapons and shedding Palestinian blood.

Second: the political, economic and financial siege on our people

The national dialogue conference affirms its total rejection to the oppressive siege imposed on our people for the last three months by the US and Israel following the PLC elections. This siege is a form of collective punishment against our people over and above the daily Israeli measures of occupation, aggression settlement activities and the apartheid wall. This siege will never help to achieve security, peace and stability in the Middle East. This explosive situation requires Arab and international action to end the siege and resume international assistance to our people, in addition to releasing the tax revenues held by the Israeli government for the third month in a row.

Third: Olmert's unilateral plan, the settlements and the wall

The national dialogue conference declares its complete rejection and resistance to Olmert's plan to confiscate our land and divide our homeland into ghettos and isolated cantons; the conference rejects all Israeli settlement attempts aimed at usurping al-Quds al-Shareef and the Jordan Valley area and annexing settlements there to Israel which would result in the confiscation of 58% of West Bank territory.

We reiterate that peace and security will never be reached as long as there are settlements and the wall on our land. The national dialogue conference stresses that it is impossible to achieve security and peace without a full Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war; hence, we call on all Arab and international parties to confront Olmert's settlement and expansion plan and to endorse the ruling issued by the International Court of Justice at The Hague which declared the occupation, settlements and the apartheid wall illegal, especially in al-Quds al-Shareef. We stress that our people will hold fast to their land, to their right to self-determination, to their right of return and to establishing an independent Palestinian state with al-Quds as its capital.

Fourth: reinforcing the rule of the law and order and eliminating security chaos

The conference reaffirms that reinforcing the rule of law and order and an independent judiciary are among the first national tasks to be undertaken by us all. There is no authority above that of the rule of the law. Security chaos is a serious threat to the security of our homeland and people and it should be firmly confronted. We need complete adherence to the Basic Law, which organizes the activity of the legislative, executive, and judicial authorities in the PNA. We also need to strengthen the security services and provide them with the necessary capacities, be it manpower or weapons, so they can put an end to the security chaos. The national dialogue conference calls for reforming the judicial system and activating its role by carrying out and enforcing its rulings and endorsing the independence of the judicial authority and all its commissions.

Fifth: developing the PLO

Conference participants requested that Abu Mazen, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, to call on the Higher Committee comprised of the Chairman, members of the PLO Executive Committee, PNC Speaker and the General Secretaries of all Palestinian factions and independent national figures, to convene as soon as possible within a period not exceeding the end of June in order to reactivate and develop the PLO and to promote its status as the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Sixth: resistance is a legitimate right of our people

The national dialogue conference reaffirms that resisting the occupation and settlements is our people's legitimate right enshrined in international charters; hence, we call on all forces and groups to form national unity committees to defend our land and our people in every village and city.

Seventh: the right of return is a sacred right of Palestinian refugees

The national dialogue conference reaffirms that the cause of the Palestinian refugees is a national cause and one that embodies our identity and future; hence, we stress that we fully adhere to UN Resolution 194 pertaining to the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and homeland. The national dialogue conference rejects all attempts that aim to nullify the refugee right of return and disperse the refugees in various countries. We stress that the right of return is a sacred right and is a collective and individual right, which cannot be obliterated by any party in the world.

Eighth: the National Conciliation Document from the Prisoners Movement

The conference participants praised all initiatives and documents presented to the conference, particularly the national conciliation document drafted by the prisoners' movement and which we consider a sound basis for national dialogue.

The conference also stresses that all relevant parties are working for the release of our prisoners and detainees and calls on all human rights organizations to direct their efforts in this direction.

Ninth: the national dialogue committee

In closing, the national dialogue conference decided to form a national dialogue committee headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, comprised of representatives from the PNC, the PLC, the PLO Executive Committee, the government, all factions from the national and Islamic forces, parliament blocs, the private sector and the civil society organizations. The committee shall start work immediately with the aim of formulating a unified national action program that promotes and reinforces our national unity.



**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, RESOLUTION ON THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN
THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES AND THE ROLE OF THE EU, 1 JUNE 2006**

The European Parliament,

having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, in particular those of 23 October 2003 on peace and dignity in the Middle East³, 27 January 2005⁴ and 2 February 2006 on the result of the Palestinian elections and the situation in East Jerusalem⁵,

having regard to the report of the EU Election Observation Mission to Palestine and to the report of Parliament's election observers,

having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions Nos 242, 338, 1373 and 1397,

having regard to the Quartet's 'Roadmap for Peace' of 30 April 2003,

having regard to the results of the national elections in Israel held on 28 March 2006,

having regard to the statement of the Quartet Principals made on 9 May 2006 in New York,

having regard to the conclusions of the General Affairs Council of 15 May 2006 on the Middle East peace process,

having regard to the Neighbourhood Agreements between the EU and Israel and the EU and Palestine,

having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas after the elections in Palestine and Israel the time has come to secure a new basis for a diplomatic and political initiative of the European Union and the Quartet (the EU, the US, Russia and the UN) which must pursue ambitious goals in order to relaunch negotiations and a process for a stable and viable peace solution,
- B. whereas the serious deterioration of the humanitarian and social situation in both Gaza and the West Bank must be faced urgently in order to avoid chaos and further political instability,
- C. whereas the elections in Palestine, held in conformity with international standards, have led to the setting-up of a government which is composed of members of the 'Change and Reform' list

³ OJ C 82 E, 1.4.2004, p. 610.

⁴ OJ C 253 E, 13.10.2005, p. 35.

⁵ *Texts Adopted*, P6_TA(2006)0041.

drawn up by Hamas, and whereas the international community is now confronted with the need to respect the democratic results of the elections,

- D. whereas the decision of Hamas to participate in the elections and its success will confer on it the responsibility to comply with the previous agreements signed by the Palestinians, which include the rejection of terrorism and the recognition of Israel's right to exist, as demanded by the international community,
- E. whereas on 9 May 2006 the Quartet reiterated its support for assistance to help meet the basic human needs of the Palestinian people, and expressed its willingness to endorse a temporary international mechanism that is limited in scope and duration and ensures direct delivery of assistance to the Palestinians; whereas the EU has been given the task of developing and proposing such a mechanism,
- F. whereas the EU is working urgently to develop this mechanism, which as a matter of priority will be aimed at contributing to meeting basic needs and includes consultation of international financial institutions and other key partners, and invites other donors to actively join in the effort to establish this mechanism as soon as possible,
- G. whereas the new Israeli government has presented guidelines which include a commitment for negotiations with the Palestinians but do not exclude unilateral measures for the implementation of the 'convergence plan' with the aim of fixing the final borders,
- H. whereas Israel should be reminded of its obligations regarding the Oslo Agreements concerning the borders of 1967, the settlements and East Jerusalem, and should be aware of the present grave situation,
 - 1. Expresses its serious concern over the deterioration of the humanitarian, economic and financial situation in the West Bank and Gaza;
 - 2. Calls on the Council and Commission to strengthen their initiatives by taking account of the following recommendations:
 - to act within the Quartet with the aim of urgently guaranteeing the flow of aid essential to the Palestinians through humanitarian agencies and NGOs and implementing the above mentioned temporary international mechanism, as proposed by the Quartet, to guarantee direct aid to the Palestinian people, which should be funnelled by the World Bank or other international bodies,
 - to invite the governments of the US and the other donor countries to ensure a broad and flexible scope for this mechanism, to facilitate it by the direct involvement of the President of the Palestinian Authority and to ensure financial control and accountability of expenditure,
 - to develop such a mechanism in order to avoid a major humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories; in this regard, calls on all the institutions involved in establishing such a temporary international financial mechanism to be as transparent as possible in order to prevent any fraud or misuse of funds,
 - to call on the Israeli government immediately to resume the direct transfer of the withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues which have been blocked since January 2006; notes that part of these funds have been transferred for payment of electricity supplies in compliance with the 1994 Paris Protocol,
 - to reinvigorate the institution-building process in Palestine, which has seen an important moment in the recent elections,
 - to continue with the EU presence in Rafah and the implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access,
 - to make a comprehensive assessment of the situation together with the High Representative for CFSP so as to guarantee coherence in both aid measures and political and diplomatic initiatives in order to conduct a dialogue with the Palestinian Authority through its President,
 - to ensure that all future assistance will be reviewed in the light of the Palestinian government's respect for these principles,
 - to take full advantage of the Action Plan with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy; the Commission, for its part, will have to guarantee the full implementation of the EU–Israel Action Plan as far as Israel's obligations towards the Palestinian Authority are concerned;

3. Welcomes the statement of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, at Parliament's plenary session of 16 May 2006 and calls on the Council and Commission to continue to support the President in his efforts to talk with Israel, the Palestinian government and the international community;
4. Supports the Palestinian President's initiative to promote national dialogue and hopes that the proposals will be accepted by all parties; considers that the President is mandated to conduct negotiations and to take responsibility for the management of international aid;
5. Considers that any contact with the newly appointed Palestinian government should aim to achieve recognition of a final peace agreement based on a solution involving two viable states and the renunciation of violence by the government itself and the groups supporting it; believes the government's clarification regarding denouncing violence and recognition of Israel's right to exist and the Palestinians' international obligations to be crucial for any co-operation by the EU with it;
6. Declares once again, at this particular stage, that a solution to the Middle East conflict is only possible through the negotiation of a firm and final peace agreement as set out in the Roadmap, without prior conditions and based on the existence of two democratic, sovereign and viable states living peacefully side by side within secure and recognised borders;
7. Welcomes the first meeting since the Israeli elections between the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Tsipi Livni, held on 20 May in Sharm-el-Sheikh, which constitutes an encouraging sign paving the way for the planned meeting between Mr Abbas and the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert; hopes that these contacts will eventually lead to the resumption of peace negotiations, pushing forward the long-stalled peace process;
8. Points out that there is no alternative to bilateral negotiations and that unilateral actions could undermine efforts to reach a lasting and comprehensive settlement;
9. Reiterates its condemnation of, and calls for an immediate halt to, the continuing extension of settlements, in particular in East Jerusalem, and the building of the wall beyond the 1967 borders, which is contrary to international law and is an obstacle to the restoration of a climate of dialogue;
10. Calls on all parties concerned to fully implement the Roadmap and calls on the Quartet to encourage negotiations for a fair and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East, leading to a firm and final peace agreement as laid out in the Roadmap;
11. Supports the constructive attitude of the Commission and Council within the Quartet in setting the conditions for a future engagement with the Palestinian Authority;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for CFSP, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Israeli Knesset and government, the governments of the US and the Russian Federation and the UN Secretary-General.



ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT, STATEMENT AFTER MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT MUBARAK, SHARM ESH-SHEIKH, 4 JUNE 2006

I thank you Mr. President for your invitation to meet with me at Sharm e-Sheikh and for the warm reception and hospitality that you have provided for myself and my delegation.

On behalf of the State of Israel, I would like to express my deepest regret over the incident that occurred over the weekend in which two Egyptian security personnel were killed. We have initiated a joint committee to investigate the incident; we will consider its findings. Similarly, we have instructed our security and intelligence forces to cooperate on the issue and to make every effort to prevent a recurrence of such incidents in the future.

We held a fruitful discussion on the main issues on the agenda, mainly ways to advance negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA).

I see you, Mr. President, as a true partner in the effort to bring peace to our region. I intend to closely consult and work with you in order to advance the peace process. Your contribution is as vital as it was during the successful implementation of the Disengagement Plan. I am very pleased by the cooperation between our countries in the struggle against global terrorism - a plague that strikes at innocent civilians. We have agreed to enhance cooperation and coordination between us and between our countries on this issue.

Mr. President, I welcome your commitment to advancing and expanding bilateral relations. As Industry, Trade and Employment Minister, I was fortunate enough to sign our bilateral QIZ agreement and we discussed this today; I have already instructed both my successor as Industry, Trade and Employment Minister and the relevant officials to expand the bilateral QIZ agreement.

Israel is committed to the Roadmap and to advancing the bilateral channel with Mahmoud Abbas, the elected Chairman of the PA. My aspiration is to exhaust all avenues in order to advance this channel. I intend to meet with PA Chairman Abbas in order to encourage the process that will enable us to achieve progress in accordance with the Roadmap. I discussed this of course with President Mubarak, who is the most experienced statesman in our region and is certainly the most experienced in contacts that could lead to peace agreements. I very much hope that the Palestinian partners will utilize this opportunity to implement all of their commitments in order to make it possible to move forward in accordance with the Roadmap.

Of course, Israel expects that the Palestinian government will fully implement the demands of the Quartet and the international community and thus make it possible to hold negotiations on the basis of the Roadmap. We have not hidden our view that if this does not occur and that if we reach the conclusion that it will not occur, we will have no alternative but to look for other ways in order to move the situation in the Middle East and in order to prevent stalemate from taking over the reality in the Middle East.

We also discussed the humanitarian situation in the PA areas and we will take all measures in order to prevent a humanitarian crisis. This is also the reason that we decided to allocate NIS 50 million for medical supplies for the Palestinian population; we are working in cooperation with the international organizations that are active in Gaza in order to meet the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population.

We also appreciate the humanitarian assistance that Egypt is providing to the Palestinians, which includes many trucks laden with food and medicines and I informed the President that I have instructed our people on the ground to remove any bureaucratic obstacles that might prevent Egypt from delivering the assistance that it is providing to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

And lastly, permit me to take this opportunity to add something personal that is not in the written statement. Mr. President, this was a very moving personal experience for me to sit with you now for approximately 1.5 hours, to hold talks and to listen to one of the most experienced and important leaders that I have had the opportunity of meeting with.

Bilateral relations between Israel and Egypt are very fundamental and very important to our worldview and to the network of relations that we want to build in the region, and the leadership of Hosni Mubarak is an important key to the success of this process.

I very much thank you Mr. President and I hope that we will be able to continue both our discussions and bilateral relations in this spirit and in the atmosphere that has prevailed at our meeting today at Sharm e-Sheikh. - Thank you.



**CONGRESSMAN MICHAEL MCCAUL OF TEXAS, DRAFT RESOLUTION TO
THE US CONGRESS, CONDEMNING THE PERSECUTION OF PALESTINIAN
CHRISTIANS BY THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY, 109TH CONGRESS,
2ND SESSION, H. RES., WASHINGTON DC, 6 JUNE 2006**

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas (for himself and Mr. CROWLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning the persecution of Palestinian Christians by the Palestinian Authority.

Whereas the foreign policy of the United States has been to create free and democratic institutions within the Palestinian territories;

Whereas democracy and freedom require strong independent institutions, a respect for the rule of law, and tolerance and protection for minorities and their rights;

Whereas the issue of human rights violations within the territories by the Palestinian Authority are treated by the international community as secondary to and ignored for the sake of the peace process;

Whereas violent rhetoric intended to radicalize Palestinian Muslims against Israel, the United States, and the West has increased incitement toward Palestinian Christian communities;

Whereas the Palestinian Authority Constitution adopts the principles of Islamic law resulting in a judicial system that puts Christians at a disadvantage;

Whereas Palestinian Christians are forced to follow Islamic law in public or face arrest by Palestinian Authority police;

Whereas the basic human rights of Christians living under Palestinian Authority rule have been repeatedly violated since the Palestinian Authority took control over major population centers in the West Bank and Gaza;

Whereas in 1994 Bethlehem was the most populous Christian town in Israel and the entire region;

Whereas Yasser Arafat gerrymandered the municipal boundaries of Bethlehem to include additional Muslim neighborhoods in order to influence the outcome of local elections through the creation of a Muslim majority;

Whereas Arafat and his supporters effectively cleansed the bureaucracy of Christians;

Whereas Palestinian Christians are denied jobs in state-run organizations because of their religious beliefs;

Whereas Palestinian Muslims and Palestinian Authority security officers demand that Christian-owned shops pay an extortion fee or close down operations;

Whereas Palestinian Christians are attacked verbally and physically for discouraging their children from participating in suicide bombings;

Whereas Palestinian Christians are accused of being Israeli and American collaborators and are interrogated and imprisoned without reason;

Whereas Palestinian Christians whose human rights are violated by Muslims cannot go the Palestinian police out of fear that they will be accused, threatened, or detained;

Whereas Christians constitute less than one-fifth of Bethlehem's population;

Whereas, since the Palestinian Authority took control over the Palestinian people, increased violence that is targeted at Palestinian Christians has led to mass emigration from Palestinian territories;

Whereas many Christians leave out of fear of greater persecution under a future Palestinian state;

Whereas internationally-recognized holy sites and cemeteries are vandalized and desecrated by the Palestinian Authority, Muslim extremists, and criminals without consequence;

Whereas Palestinian police do not respond to harassment complaints made by Palestinian Christians;

Whereas the knowledge that violence toward Christians will not likely be punished has led to a significant increase in pervasive sexual harassment and rape;

Whereas, according to international law, rape is defined as a crime against humanity when the victim is targeted for adherence to a particular religion;

Whereas the United States Department of State has consistently failed to analyze in detail the treatment of Palestinian Christians by the Palestinian Authority in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and its annual Report on International Religious Freedom;

Whereas the fear of persecution and the lack of reported harassment cases distorts the human rights record of the Palestinian Authority, thereby misinforming Congress and the American public;

Whereas this information should have been available to Members of Congress to consider when deciding the appropriate relationship toward the Palestinian Authority, including the appropriate level of assistance to be provided for the Palestinian Authority; and

Whereas the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 calls on the President to place sanctions on governments that perpetrate or allow violations of religious freedoms against their citizens;

Resolved, That— 1

(1) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that

(A) it should be the policy of the United States to promote truly free and democratic Palestinian institutions with a respect for the rule of law and tolerance and protection for all minorities and their rights; and

(B) in order to receive assistance from the United States, the institutional protection of religious minorities should be a prerequisite for any Palestinian government; and

(2) the House of Representatives—

(A) urges the President and Secretary of State to address the condition of minorities under Palestinian Authority rule in order to save from destruction the oldest Christian community in the world;

(B) urges the Department of State in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and Report on International Religious Freedom to investigate and report on the extent of human rights violations by the Palestinian Authority; and

(C) encourages democracies and world leaders to prioritize the human rights condition of Christian communities and other religious minorities in the Palestinian territories and other locations throughout the world where such communities and minorities are threatened.



**JORDANIAN KING ABDULLAH II, ADDRESS TO GRADUATES OF
MU'TA UNIVERSITY, KARAK, JORDAN, 7 JUNE 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This region around us is passing through the most difficult conditions, and worst developments; the deteriorating state of affairs in the West Bank and in Iraq, and the dispute between Iran and the United States of America, all threaten security and stability. It is clear that there are parties and states who seek to benefit from this state of affairs. Some seek to settle their problems at the expense of neighboring countries; others want to ignite this situation and spread chaos and destruction in more than one place, to enhance their influence and control over the whole region. Hence we should be at the highest level of alertness and preparedness in order to face the worst possible scenarios and to defend our country and national interests.

All of us, the one Jordanian family, from all origins and affiliations, notwithstanding our political or intellectual differences, or particular interests, should be as one hand, one heart and one line of defense in facing the challenges and risks that today surround this homeland from almost every side. We want everyone, whether near or far, to know that Jordan First is not just a slogan. It is a principle etched in our conscience, and we should express it through our work, behavior and genuine belonging to this homeland.

If there is anyone who believes that it is possible to settle the Palestinian issue at the expense of Jordan, he should know that Jordan will never be a substitute homeland for anybody, and that the Palestinians' homeland and their state should be on Palestinian soil, and nowhere else.

If Jordan opens its doors and arms to all the Arab brethren, and if it is keen to be a sanctuary for every Arab who is subjected to injustice, this does not mean that we should be lenient towards or tolerant of any party that tries to disrupt this country's security and stability. Jordan is first, and Jordan's interests supersede all other interests and considerations.

We know that there are some who seek strength from some states to hurt this country, or to disrupt the relationship between the two brotherly peoples, the Jordanians and the Palestinians.

Those, and those who stand behind them, should know that the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is a sacred historic bond, and that Jordan will always be – as it has always been – the closest and most supportive brother – with all his capabilities – to the Palestinian people, until the Palestinian state is established on Palestinian land.



**JOINT POLICY STATEMENT BY NORWAY AND SPAIN ON THE CONFLICT
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS, 7 JUNE 2006**

For more than a decade, the Governments of Norway and Spain have been involved in efforts to facilitate the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. It is a foreign policy priority for both countries to contribute to a viable two-state solution based on a negotiated agreement. We are now deeply concerned about the current situation in the West Bank and Gaza. There is a risk of great human suffering and economic decline, which would further worsen the Palestinians' living conditions. In this situation both governments have expressed their intention to maintain their assistance to the Palestinian people. Institutional decay would make it difficult for the Palestinian National Authority and providers of humanitarian assistance to operate properly. Internal differences in Palestinian society are on the rise and leading to increasing lawlessness in the territory. This situation also has implications for the stability of the whole region and calls for constructive initiatives.

We welcome President Abbas' efforts to mobilise Palestinian support for resolving the conflict peacefully, through direct negotiations with Israel. His efforts to bring about national consensus for this purpose should gain broad international support. The Palestinian Government should take steps immediately towards complying with the demands put forward by the Quartet to renounce violence, recognise the state of Israel and accept previously concluded agreements. At the same time, we expect Israel to respect previously concluded agreements, key UN resolutions and demands from the international community to stop annexing Palestinian land, cease illegal settlement activities and stop work on the separation wall.

At this juncture, our two countries have identified the following common areas for closer cooperation.

- Norway and Spain support President Abbas' proposal to develop a national dialogue between Palestinian factions.
- Norway and Spain will financially support a funding mechanism administered by the President's Office to finance Palestinian missions abroad.
- Norway and Spain will actively support dialogue between the parties, especially with the objective to achieve a fair and lasting peace. The two governments recall their past contributions to the peace process and show their readiness to actively support the scenario of future negotiations in coordination with the parties and the members of the Quartet.
- Norway and Spain both have a significant involvement in the Palestinian energy sector. We will explore ways and means to further strengthen our involvement financially and technically and assist in the efforts to enhance Palestinian participation in regional energy cooperation.
- Norway and Spain will financially support a broad based assessment of water-related environmental problems in the West Bank. We will together consult with the parties on how this assessment could be undertaken, its terms of reference and the possible involvement of UNEP in this work.
- Norway and Spain will seek close cooperation with involved parties in order to strengthen regional initiatives related to water issues.



STATE OF PALESTINE, REFERENDUM ON THE NATIONAL CONCILIATION DOCUMENT ("PRISONERS DOCUMENT"), RAMALLAH, 10 JUNE 2006

Decree no. () for 2006

Regarding the referendum on the national conciliation document "Prisoners Document"

President of the State of Palestine
Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee
President of the PNA

After reviewing the decision of the PLO Central Council held in Tunis on October 10-12, 1993, on the establishment of the PNA with the PLO as its reference

And based on the decision of the PLO Executive Committee held on June 6, 2006,

And based on the provisions of the amended Basic Law of 2003 and its amendments,

And for the purpose of protecting the higher interests of the people and their constitutional institutions and their national unity,

And to avoid the dangers facing the homeland,

And pursuant to the authority vested in us,

Introduction

In adhering to the Palestinian national constants ratified by the PLO and in realization of the constitutional vow to fully protect the interests of the Palestinian people in my capacity as Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and President of the PNA, and in harmony with my right and duty to get back to the people who are the source of all authorities and in applying direct democratic practices where the popular referendum is considered its most advanced images, and resorting to the origins of matters since the popular referendum is the core of legitimate practices based on the general constitutional principles referred to in the amended Basic Law of 2003,

In my capacity as the Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and President of the PNA, I decided to exercise this constitutional right and duty to hold a referendum on the national conciliation document "Prisoners Document" which came due to the necessities to protect and care for the higher interests of the Palestinian people and to confront the dangers facing the unity of the people and the safety of the homeland,

We issue the following:

Article (1): The Palestinian people in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip are called upon to participate in the referendum on the national conciliation document "Prisoners Document" attached with this decree on Wednesday, July 26, 2006 between 7:00am and 9:00pm.

Article (2): a- the referendum will be to express the viewpoint on the following question: "Do you agree to the national conciliation document "Prisoners Document"?"

b- The answer must be either Yes or No.

Article (3): All those with the right to vote can exercise this right, according to the provisions of the Elections Law no. (9) of 2005, in direct, free, individual and secret ballot and there wont be any voting by proxy.

Article (4): The Central Elections Commission shall assume the duty of organizing and managing the referendum and take all necessary measures to secure free and honest elections.

Article (5): The referendum shall reflect the will of the Palestinian people through the absolute majority of the voters in the referendum.

Article (6): 1- the provisions of Elections Law no. 9 for 2005 and the relevant regulations shall be applied on any issue not mentioned in the text of this decree and to the extent required by the referendum process.

2- the Central Elections Commission shall decide on any matter pertaining to the referendum in the absence of any text dealing with it.

Article (7): Wednesday, July 26, 2006, the date of the referendum according to this decree shall be an official holiday.

Article (8): The Central Elections Commission shall publish the national conciliation document "Prisoners Document" in the mass media and local newspapers to be accessible by the citizens.

Article (9): All competent parties, each according to its own jurisdiction, shall execute the provisions of this decree which shall be effective upon its issuance and shall be published along with the national conciliation document "Prisoners Document" in the official gazette.

Issued in the city of Ramallah on June 10, 2006 AD, Jamadi al-Awwal 14, 1427 Hijri



**PERMANENT OBSERVER OF PALESTINE TO THE UN, RIYAD MANSOUR,
IDENTICAL LETTERS TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, 13 JUNE 2006**

Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to commit grave breaches of international humanitarian law, including acts constituting war crimes and State terrorism, against the Palestinian civilian population under its belligerent foreign occupation. The escalation of military attacks and excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against civilians, particularly in the Gaza Strip, has been the cause of an ever-rising toll off bloodshed, death and injury suffered by the Palestinian people at the hands of their occupier.

Today, 13 June 2006, the Israeli occupying forces launched yet another targeted, deliberate air strike against a vehicle travelling in the densely populated Zeitoun neighbourhood in central Gaza City. The occupying forces launched several missiles, striking the vehicle as well as a nearby home, which resulted in the killing of at least nine Palestinians. Among the civilians killed were a father and his young son and another child from the same family, the Al-Mughrabi family, in addition to three Palestinian medical personnel who had rushed to the area to tend to the casualties after the first missile struck. More than 40 other civilians were also wounded in that attack, including children who were playing inside and near the home at the time of the attack. Several of the wounded are reported by Gaza hospitals to be in critical condition and there is fear that the death toll from this deadly Israeli attack may still rise.

In addition to the brutal killings committed today by the occupying forces, on Sunday, 11 June, another targeted air strike was launched against an area in Beit Lahiya, near the Jabaliya refugee camp, in which two Palestinian men were killed and three others were wounded. At the same time, the occupying Power has resumed its sonic boom attacks over the Gaza Strip, causing widespread fear and terror among the Palestinian people, especially children, and causing damage to property. Moreover, Israeli officials, including the Defence Minister, who, in response to the international outcry regarding the killing of civilians, has stated that Israel will not exercise restraint, continue to make inflammatory statements of incitement, indicating that these kinds of military attacks and acts of State terrorism against Palestinian civilians will not only continue but will intensify, further inflaming the cycle of violence and further jeopardizing any Palestinian efforts to achieve calm.

The international community must continue to strongly condemn Israel's escalation of extrajudicial killings and deliberate and indiscriminate military attacks against civilian areas and, furthermore, the international community must take immediate action to bring a halt to these grave human rights viola-

tions and crimes against the Palestinian people. In this regard, I believe it is imperative to recall the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, and thus the obligation of the High Contracting Parties to ensure the protection of the civilian population under Israel's occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It is in this vein that on Sunday, 11 June 2006, five Israeli organizations, including the main human rights organization, B'tselem, called upon the Israeli government to cease its killing of Palestinian civilians. It is time now for the international community as a whole, including the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities in this regard to bring an end to these violations, to the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation and to the continuing deterioration of the situation on the ground, which poses a serious threat to regional stability.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 245 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 9 June 2006 (A/ES-10/337-S/2006/378), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, I regret to inform you that since my last letter to you four days ago, at least 13 more Palestinian civilians, including children, have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 3,914. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified are listed in the annex to the present letter.)

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Riyad Mansour
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, WASHINGTON, DC, 17 JUNE 2006

Recalling its statements of January 30 and May 9, and mindful of the needs of the Palestinian people, the Quartet endorsed a European Union proposal for a temporary international mechanism, limited in scope and duration, which operates with full transparency and accountability. The mechanism facilitates needs-based assistance directly to the Palestinian people, including essential equipment, supplies, and support for health services, support for the uninterrupted supply of fuel and utilities, and basic needs allowances to poor Palestinians. The Quartet expressed its hope that other donors, international organizations, and the State of Israel would consider participation in this mechanism. The Quartet will review the continued need for such a mechanism after three months. Donors are also encouraged to respond to humanitarian and other assistance requests by international organizations, especially UN agencies, active in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Quartet reiterated its call for the Palestinian Authority government to commit to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. The Palestinian Authority government must fulfill its responsibilities with respect to basic human needs, including health services, as well as for proper fiscal management and provision of services.



**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT, SPEECH AT THE
35TH ZIONIST CONGRESS, JERUSALEM, 20 JUNE 2006**

Chairman of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization, my friend Ze'ev Bielsky, President of the 35th Congress, MK Yoel Hasson, Ms. Marilyn Post, Ms. Jane Schechter, The Honorable Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, Members of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Agency, Congress Presidency, Congress Delegates, Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the State and Government of Israel, I warmly welcome this gathering of the 35th Zionist Congress, here in Jerusalem, which is Zion, the beating heart, and the object of yearning and prayers of the Jewish people for generations.

Not long ago, we marked a century since the death of the founder of the Zionist movement and visionary of the State, Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl.

There is a straight line between Basel and Jerusalem, the line of political Zionism, whose aim was the return of the Jewish people to the stage of history as an independent and sovereign nation, which takes its fate into its own hands, in the Land of Israel, the heritage of our forefathers.

The responsibility for the destiny of the Zionist enterprise and the future of the Jewish people is now in our hands, and based on this, we will mold our decisions and moves here in Israel and in the world Zionist movement.

In Altneuland, Herzl envisioned a utopian state. The State of Israel is not one, because in our world there is no utopian reality.

In many ways, the State of Israel has exceeded Herzl's vision, in other ways it is still remote. Herzl believed that the Land of Israel could be given to the Jewish people by international charter, on a silver platter (literally). He hoped that the Arabs in the Land of Israel would favorably accept the return to Zion, which would bring with it progress and development.

The Zionist movement was, at first, completely free of any thoughts of struggle and military strength. At Basel, Herzl declared: "On the day when there is a plow in the hands of a courageous Jewish farmer, the Jewish question will find its solution."

Herzl did indeed create the movement, which realized the great vision, but the path to realization was not strewn with roses. It was paved with blood, sweat and tears. It demanded sacrifice, dedication and supreme heroism.

The entire time, it needed an "iron wall" in the form of our wonderful defensive shield, the Israel Defense Forces.

No, "the Jewish question" has still not been resolved, and now, more than 100 hundred years after Herzl, we are still dealing with it, in Israel and in the Diaspora.

It would be good if every Jew in the world would make Aliyah to Israel, and it would be good if all the peoples of the region would accept Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, and live in full peace with us.

If this were the situation, it would, perhaps, be possible to say that the "Jewish question" had been resolved.

Since such is not the situation - a large portion of the Jewish people still live in the Diaspora, and the State of Israel is still threatened and mired in a struggle to achieve security and peace - we must gather to discuss the "Jewish question" here at the 35th Zionist Congress as well.

The fundamental issues on the table at the Congress are, as always:

- A. First, ensuring the future of Jewish existence overseas, through Zionist activity, encouraging Aliyah, providing Jewish and Zionist education to the young generation, and deepening the identity, solidarity with and affinity to Israel.
- B. Second, assistance to Jews in distress and waging war against anti-Semitism anywhere in the world.

And finally, unification of the Jewish people with the State of Israel, and providing moral and political support to Israel's struggle for security and peace.

For these goals, the Zionist movement must renew and strengthen, cooperate and gather together under its wing more and more Jewish communities, frameworks, institutions and organizations, and find additional means of mobilizing resources to expand its activities.

One subject was always with us, and in my opinion, will always be at the heart of the Zionist idea and experience as long as there is a Jewish Diaspora in the world. I speak of Aliyah. This phrase - "Aliyah [literally ascension] to Israel" - has long since eroded and become rusty. It is not said at the level it once was, but rather in a weak voice, as if one were speaking of a good-for-nothing, old fashioned, politically incorrect demand.

Aliyah, which is the essence of Zionism and the pinnacle of Zionist accomplishment, has been shoved from the center, and abandoned, ashamed, on the side of the road. We must return it to its rightful place, return its glory and place it as our primary goal.

The 35th Congress must raise the banner of Aliyah anew as a challenge to the young generation in the Diaspora.

Today, the State of Israel marches at the forefront of advanced global science and technology, the Israeli economy is prosperous and promising, and the opportunities the State of Israel is offering its immigrants, especially Olim with higher education, are vast.

Only in the State of Israel is Jewish continuity ensured from generation to generation. Only here, in Jerusalem and the Land of Israel, can the Jew return to the sovereign history of his people in order to create new and glorious chapters.

I call on all delegates to the 35th Congress to join together around our common goals, rise above partisan and organizational disagreements, and lead the entire Zionist movement forward.

The challenges we face today in the State of Israel and the Diaspora are immense, and demand the full mobilization of all our forces.

Ladies and Gentlemen, delegates of the Congress,

Today, the State of Israel is already closer to being the place in which the majority of Jews in the world live. I would like this fact to be determined solely by an increasing stream of Aliyah, but unfortunately, this is not to be at this time. Demographics point to processes of shrinking Jewish communities in the Diaspora due to low birth rates, assimilation, mixed marriages or unintentional alienation from their Jewish identity.

This fact intensifies the responsibility for the future of the Jewish people on the State of Israel and the world Zionist movement. The first lesson is that the State of Israel must forever contain a solid and guaranteed Jewish majority.

It is our duty to prevent any danger of losing this Jewish majority or creating an inseparable bi-national reality in the Land of Israel. We aspire to reach a peace agreement with our Palestinian neighbors, based on division of the land and "two countries for two peoples".

Division of the land is not our heart's desire, it is simply a reality. I was raised and educated in total Zionism, and the entire Land of Israel is precious to me. I wholeheartedly believe in the right of the Jewish people to the entire Land of Israel. However, as one who carries the supreme responsibility in the State of Israel, I see reality as it is, with my eyes wide open.

The demographic balance between Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel is not static. Time is not neutral in this case - it is acting against us.

If we wish to ensure the existence and future of a Jewish and democratic Israel, we must act now, in the next few years, and shape the permanent borders of the State of Israel. I intend to seriously and thoroughly examine whether there is a possibility of doing so through negotiation and agreement with the Palestinians, since this possibility is preferable under all circumstances.

However, I do not intend to wait forever. If this possibility proves to be impractical within a certain space of time, we will have to make decisions, which will serve Zionist goals, and the most vital interests of the State of Israel. This is my duty. This is my responsibility.

Under no circumstances is ongoing deadlock an option. On the basis of serious talks with President George Bush and important leaders in Europe and the Middle East, I believe that if our willingness to negotiate and make far-reaching concessions is met by Palestinian dissension such as that of Hamas - the steps Israel will take will receive international backing.

I have absolutely no doubt that the majority of citizens of Israel will give me their support.

In the meantime, we will of course continue our fight against terror. Terrorist organizations gain inspiration from fundamentalist, anti-Semitic and murderous ideologies, which call for the blood of all Jews and Israelis.

The heads of terror, who cry for our destruction after every unfortunate accidental and unintended injury to innocents due to IDF fire, are the ones who will send murderers to blow up buses full of passengers, families innocently dining, teenagers at entertainment venues, and women and children at busy shopping centers.

They are the ones shooting, in these very days, at civilian population in the south of the country, in cities like Sderot and in villages and Kibbutzim in the southern part of the State of Israel. I want to take this opportunity, here and now, to tell the residents of the south, to the people of Sderot, to Kibbutzim such as Yad-Mordechai and Nahal Oz and Kfar Aza and other communities: no one is more familiar with the level of the pain, anxiety and uncertainty which you are experiencing these days. Here, in this city, in the capital of Israel, the very heart of the State of Israel, we have, for many years, undergone the most difficult, painful, heart-wrenching experiences, with countless victims and families shattered. We are familiar with this reality. I am familiar with your painful reality, in Sderot and in the south of the country. I know how difficult it is. I know it is scary. I know the feeling of every parent whose child goes to school and he does not know where the next rocket will land or where the bomb - dispatched by these murderers to the heart of the State of Israel for the purpose of harming innocent civilians - will fall. And you also know well that despite the hardship and the pain, we cannot find a comprehensive, overall and permanent solution to instantly remove this threat, once and for all. We have been living - and you have been living - with this hardship for quite a long time, and I am filled with admiration and appreciation to you for your stamina, patience and courage. I fully understand the fears, insecurity, pain and uncertainty that many of you feel.

From here I say to those who are trying to hurt you - we will take harsh measures, more harsh and more painful than the ones taken before. We will reach every place, we will reach every one, there will be no immunity to anyone involved in terrorism, regardless of what they do or who they belong to. We will not relent in this war and we will defeat terrorism and bring security to all the parts of the State of Israel, in the south of the country and in other areas.

Despite the fact that the terrorists act in and fire from densely populated areas, the IDF is mostly successful in isolating the murderers, and targeting them and them only.

Under these fighting conditions, unfortunately, sometimes innocent citizens are injured, despite all the efforts to avoid it. However, we must remember that the fight against terror was forced on us.

The Palestinian Authority never upheld their commitment to stop terror attacks and dismantle terrorist organizations. When it happens, there will, of course, be no need to continue fighting. Regrettably, I do not see this happening in the near future.

The terrorist organizations would not be able to continue to act if they did not receive encouragement, funding, training and guidance from regimes and organizations which support terror on the axis of evil which runs through Tehran, Damascus, Al Qaeda, global Jihad and Hizbollah.

The shameful statements made by the President of Iran were heard by the entire world, and it is inconceivable that such a fanatical dictatorial regime will have the weapons to realize his insane visions.

We must not forget the lessons of history. We, the Jews, certainly cannot forget.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I again welcome all the participants in the 35th Zionist Congress - the elected delegates from Israel, other delegates, representatives of the Zionist women's movements Hadassah and Wizo, Ne'amat and Emunah, the delegates representing various organizations: the World Federation of Sephardic Communities, world B'nai B'rith, World Maccabi Federation, the World Assembly of Synagogues and Orthodox Communities, the World Conservative Union of Synagogues, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the Reform Movement, representatives of student organizations, the Zionist Council of Israel, and at the end of the list, although I already mentioned it, World Emunah.

May all your discussions at this Congress and decisions made strengthen the World Zionist Federation, advance the goals of the World Zionist movement, and transform the 35th Congress into a milestone and starting point towards a new Zionist drive.

Welcome and good luck!



**THE INTERIM FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINIANS OF
FOREIGN CITIZENSHIPS DENIED ENTRY TO THE HOMELAND,
LETTER TO FOREIGN CONSULS, 20 JUNE 2006**

Dear Consul,

During the last three months, the Israeli occupation authorities denied entry to the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Palestinians of foreign citizenships, through border crossings including the Allenby Bridge and the Ben Gurion International Airport. Many of those Palestinians have lived in the Palestinian Territories for years; moreover, most of them are married to Palestinians and have children; they have invested their wealth, their future, and their lives in the homeland.

We call upon all foreign consuls, official representatives to the Palestinian National Authority, international organizations, the United Nations, and the European Union to act immediately on behalf of those European and American citizens of Palestinian origins in order to end the oppressive measures and human rights violations that are currently being carried out against those citizens. The relevant states must urge the Israeli government to allow those EU and US citizens come home to their spouses and children. We must also keep in mind that it is your duty to protect and serve your nationals.

Henceforth, we urge you to act immediately and put an end to the Israeli arbitrary measure of denying entry to all those victims since such measure leads only to separating children and spouses from their loved ones and ruin the lives and the future they had worked hard to build.

Your inaction will only add insult to injury; you must act now in order to end the humiliation and oppression people undergo each and everyday while they are away from their loved ones and the dream they worked so hard to make real. Your inaction cannot be justified; your ethical and moral duties call upon you to take measures; otherwise this can only be seen as support for the illegal Israeli actions.

The Interim Follow up Committee for Palestinians of Foreign Citizenships Denied Entry to Homeland Nationalities: US, EU: Spanish, Swedish, Italian, Irish, Canadian, and Brazilian



RESOLUTIONS OF THE 33RD SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS (SESSION OF HARMONY OF RIGHTS, FREEDOMS AND JUSTICE), BAKU, REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, 19-21 JUNE 2006 [EXCERPTS]

RESOLUTION N. 1/33-PAL: ON THE CAUSE OF PALESTINE, THE CITY OF AL-QUDS AL-SHARIF AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

The Thirty-third Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 23 to 25 Jumada Awal, 1427H (19-21 June 2006),

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the Cause of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Document No. OIC/33-2006/PAL/SG/REP.);

Proceeding from the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC);

Based on the Islamic resolutions on the Cause of Palestine, the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Arab-Israeli Conflict;

Recalling the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, particularly resolutions 242 (1967); 252 (1968); 338 (1973); 425 (1978); 465 (1980); 476 (1980); 478 (1980); 681 (1990); 1073 (1996); 1397 (2002); 1435 (2002); and 1515 (2003) and UN General Assembly resolution 194 on refugees, as well as resolution ES-10-10 adopted by the 10th Extraordinary Emergency Session of the General Assembly in 2002 on illegal Israeli practices in the occupied East Jerusalem and the other occupied Palestinian territories, as well as the UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/L15 on the apartheid wall which Israel is building on Palestinian land;

Referring to the resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights relating to human rights violations in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, as well as the resolutions adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the African Union (AU) and the League of Arab States;

Affirming the Islamic States' commitment to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region;

Emphasizing that the Israeli policies, practices and expansionist designs threaten not only Arab states and the peace process, but also the Islamic countries at large and jeopardize international peace and security;

Hailing the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and their valiant "*Intifada*" (uprising) aimed at recovering their inalienable national rights, as stipulated in all Arab and International resolutions.

1. *Reaffirms* all the resolutions adopted by the Islamic Conferences and Al-Quds Committee concerning the Cause of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.
2. *Pays tribute* to the Palestinian Legislative elections which, once again, bear evidence to the Palestinian people's aptitude, capability and entitlement to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State on their national territories with Eastern Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, *invites* the international community to respect the Palestinian people's

- democratic choice, and *expresses* its support to the Palestinian national authority and the Palestinian national dialogue aimed at affirming the Palestinian unity of rank and at reaching the most effective ways to achieve the emergence of the independent Palestinian State and a peace founded on the principle of two States in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map.
3. *Affirms* the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the occupied Syrian Golan and the other occupied Lebanese territories.
 4. *Affirms* the necessity of reaching a just solution to the Palestinian cause in all its aspects on the basis of international law and legitimacy and the terms of reference agreed upon, embodied in the relevant UN resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the inadmissibility of acquisition of others' territory by force, the Arab peace initiative and the Roadmap, such as to enable the Palestinian people to achieve their national independence and exercise their sovereignty in their Palestinian State and its capital Al-Quds Al-Sharif.
 5. *Affirms* the illegality of the Israeli laws and practices in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, aimed at annexing, judaizing and changing the demographic make-up of the city. *Demands* States and international institutions and bodies to abide by international resolutions on the City of Al-Quds as an integral part of the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967; and *calls on* them also to not participate in any meeting or activity that serves Israel's objectives in establishing its occupation and annexation of the Holy City.
 6. *Reaffirms* the necessity of finding a just solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly UN General Assembly resolution 194 (1948), and *reiterates* its rejection of all forms of settlement, and emphasizes the United Nations' responsibility towards the Palestinian cause and the continued role of the UNRWA in this respect.
 7. *Reaffirms* its commitment to and support for the Arab peace initiative and the Roadmap, and *rejects* the stands that run counter to the rules of international legitimacy and the terms of reference of the peace process enshrined in the two speeches of the Israeli Prime Minister and the American President, including those stands that attempt to anticipate the outcomes of negotiations on the final settlement issues. *Demands* all States and international organizations to not recognize or deal with any guarantees or promises undermining the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and rewarding the Israeli occupation which seeks to impose its conditions through the policy of *fait accompli*.
 8. *Calls upon* the QUARTET to resume serious work in order to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East in accordance with the Roadmap and the Arab peace initiative, to affirm the Palestinian territorial unity and integrity, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to *reject* any changes in the legal status of only a part of this territory, and to *exclude* the option of a State with temporary borders.
 9. *Reiterates* its rejection of the Israeli fragmentary solutions and unilateral measures which Israel has adopted or intends to adopt in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including Al-Quds/Jerusalem, through which Israel is trying to preempt the outcome of the negotiations around the issues of the final status, and the unilateral border demarcation on the part of Israel in such a way as to fulfill its expansionist and intentions which thus undermines the chances of the emergence of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State.
 10. *Invites* the UN Security Council to assume its responsibility in maintaining international peace and security by forcing Israel to put an end to its occupation of the Palestine and Arab territories and aggression and its illegal measures and practices embodied in the killing of civilians, detention, collective punishment, siege and destruction of the Palestinian economy.
 11. *Affirms* its condemnation of Israel's continued colonization of the Palestinian territories through all forms of settlement activity, and requests the UN Security Council to see to their immediate ending and prohibition and to remove the existing Israeli settlements in accordance with UNSC resolution 465 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Conference *calls on* the UN Security Council also to reinvigorate the International supervisory and Monitoring Committee in order to prevent settlement in al-Quds and the occupied Arab territories in accordance with UNSC resolution 446.

12. *Strongly condemns* Israel, “the occupying power”, for continuing to build the expansionist wall on Palestinian territories, including the so-called “Jerusalem Envelope” which is aimed at tearing apart al Quds and isolating its population. It *stresses* the extreme importance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued in this connection and the UN General Assembly’s decision providing for the need for Israel, the UN Member States and the UN itself to abide by their legal obligations, including the appeal launched by the General Assembly of Switzerland, in its capacity as the State wherewith the Fourth Geneva Convention is deposited, to make the necessary consultations to convene a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.
13. *Urges* the international community to counter the construction of the segregationist separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories and its damaging impacts on the Palestinian people and their land, waters and borders, and the need to stop the construction of the wall and removing the existing parts thereof. It *invites* all States of the world to impose punitive measures against the bodies and companies contributing to the construction of the wall and against settlers, settlement products and all those making profit of any settlement activity on the occupied Palestinian territories, including al-Quds, in implementation of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/15.
14. *Condemns* Israel for the excavation works around and beneath the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque and for willfully destroying cultural and heritage sites in Al Quds, Nablus and Al-Khaleel (Hebron), and *commends* the initiative of the Director General of UNESCO concerning the preservation of the historical heritage of the city of Al Quds. In this regard, *resolves* to coordinate between the OIC General Secretariat and the UNESCO, and *invites* the Member States to support this initiative and help implement it.
15. *Strongly condemns* the Israeli schemes attempting to seize and annex the area of Ghor, the Read Sea, the Eastern slopes of the West Bank mountains, and to cut the remaining territories into three isolated cantons to prevent the possibility of the emergence of an independent contiguous Palestinian State on the Palestinian territories.
16. *Condemns* Israel for plundering, moving and sabotaging cultural assets in numerous Palestinian cultural centers and museums, and *demand*s the international community, the UNESCO and the World Heritage Commission to impose deterrent sanctions on Israel on grounds of the danger it constitutes to the treasures of world heritage, and to act toward the return of these plundered assets to Palestinian museums and cultural centers.
17. *Calls for* strengthened cooperation and coordination with international and regional organizations concerning the cause of al-Quds al-Sharif and Palestine, and *requests* the General Secretariat to organize joint activities with these organizations to support the Palestinian’s rights.
18. *Strongly condemns* Israel for its continued aggressions against the Islamic and Christian sanctities, and particularly for its repeated threats to break into and damage the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque; and holds Israel, as the “occupying power”, fully responsible for the consequences of these aggressions, which are carried out particularly as they happen under the witness and protection of Israeli occupation forces. It *condemns* terrorism exercised by settler gangs against Palestinian civilians and peace activists.
19. *Condemns* the project of establishing a Metro to link Al Quds Jerusalem with the Israeli settlements established by Israel in the West Bank *reiterates* the illegality of such a project and invites the two French contractors to withdraw immediately and calls for appropriate measures against them in case of failure to respond. It *also calls* on the friendly government of France to adopt the required steps to this effect in this matter.
20. *Reaffirms* the previous resolutions of the Islamic conferences supporting the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and consolidating the steadfastness of its people, and *calls upon* the Member States to support *Bait Mal Al-Quds* and Al-Quds Fund in order to enable them to perform their missions in safeguarding the Arab, Islamic and civilizational character of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and strengthening the steadfastness of its people in countering the continued Israeli measures aimed to judaizing the Holy City.
21. *Condemns* the flagrant Israeli aggression that targeted the Jericho Prison and the abduction of a number of Palestinian national figures who were held there, in what must be considered as a blatant violation of the Geneva Agreements and international law. It *also invites* the interna-

- tional community, and more particularly the Quartet Committee to condemn such a criminal act and assume full responsibility in ensuring the abducted person's safety and security and to exert efforts to impress upon Israel to release them and to ensure non-recurrence of such aggressions and exactions that violates the concluded agreements.
22. *Expresses deep concern* over the tragic conditions endured by the Palestinian and Arab detainees in Israeli jails and detention centres, and urges the international community, represented in the humanitarian and justice defending organizations to expose the inhuman practices in Israeli prisons and exercise pressure on Israel to release the concerned detainees in compliance with the concluded agreements and understandings.
 23. *Commends* the efforts put in by the Islamic Development Bank both in managing the Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds Funds, and in contributing from its own resources to finance the building, and equipment of health and educational facilities.
 24. *Invites* the Member States that have not yet joined the two funds to do so, and urges volunteering institutions to utilize the technical capacities and the contracting and disbursement mechanisms provided by the IDB in order to finance programmes and projects that meet the priority needs of the Palestinian people according to the best professional standards and practices.
 25. *Entrusts* the General Secretariat and the Islamic Development Bank to make consultations to mobilize resources in order to support the Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds funds from the rest of OIC Member States, and to issue appropriate resolutions to increase the Funds' resources and contributions.
 26. *Affirms* its determined support and backing for the Syrian Arab Republic's demand and right to restore the totality of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, on the basis of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy, building on what has been accomplished in post-1991 Madrid Conference negotiations. It reaffirms the previous Islamic resolutions which reject all the actions taken by the Israeli occupation authorities aimed at changing the legal, natural and demographic status of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, considering these actions null and void and a violation to international agreements and to UN Charter and resolutions.
 27. *Emphasizes* that the continued occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan constitutes a permanent threat to peace and security in the region and the world, and strongly condemns the Israeli practices of building and expanding settlements. It urges the international community to hold to the resolutions of international legitimacy, and renews its support and backing for the steadfastness of the Arab citizens in the occupied Arab Syrian Golan in countering occupation and its oppressive practices, as well as their determination to hold fast to their land and Syrian Arab identity.
 28. *Reaffirms* its support for Lebanon in its efforts to complete the liberation of all its territories up to the internationally recognized borders, and in its demands to release Lebanese prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons. *Also demands* the UN Security Council to act toward preventing the repeated Israeli violations of Lebanon's sovereignty in land, air and sea,
 29. and to *force* Israel to pay damages for all the losses sustained by the Lebanese territories as a result of its continuous aggressions against Lebanon. It *supports* Lebanon in its demands for the removal of the mines left behind by the Israeli occupation, as Israel is responsible for laying and removing these mines, and for the need to hand over full mine location maps. *It also supports* the inalienable rights of Lebanon to utilize its waters in accordance with the international law, *condemns* Israel's designs on these waters, and *holds* Israel responsible for any action that would infringe upon Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence, safety of its people and integrity of its territories.
 30. *Urges* the international community and the UN Security Council to compel Israel to comply with U.N. resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 487 of 1981, to join the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty, implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) calling for subjecting all Israeli nuclear installations to the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. *Emphasizes* the necessity for Israel to declare rejection of nuclear armament and to submit to the UN Security Council and the IAEA a factual statement on its capabilities and stockpile of nuclear weapons and substances, given the fact that those are imperative steps toward making the Middle East a WMD-free area, particularly of nuclear weapons, which is essential to the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution and to report thereon to the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

RESOLUTION No. 2/33-PAL: ON THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

The Thirty-third Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 23 to 25 Jumada Awal, 1427H (19-21 June 2006),

Having discussed the item titled "The Occupied Syrian Golan" and Israel's decision of 14/12/1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Occupied Syrian Golan;

Having reviewed the oppressive measures to which the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan are being subjected and Israel's continued attempts to force them to accept Israeli identity;

Recalling the relevant resolutions of previous Islamic Conferences, particularly Resolution 2/31-P of the 31st Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, and Resolution 3/10-P (IS) of the 10th Islamic Summit held in Putrajaya, Malaysia;

Recalling also Security Council Resolution 497 (1981) dated 17/12/1981 and the relevant UN General Assembly resolutions, latest of which was the one adopted by the Fifty-ninth Session;

Observing that Israel, in violation of Article 25 of the United Nations Charter, has refused to accept and implement the numerous relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council, in particular resolution 497 (1981) which considered null and void and with no legal consequence Israel's decision to annex the occupied Syrian Golan;

Deeply concerned at Israel's persistent attempts to defy the will of the international community and its reaffirmation of the annexation decisions considered null and void and illegitimate by the international community;

Affirming that the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in times of War (dated 12 August 1949) applies to the occupied Syrian Golan and that setting up settlements and bringing settlers to this area violates this Convention and destroys the peace process;

Affirming the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territories by force;

Condemning Israel's non-compliance with the will of the international community by withdrawing from the occupied Syrian Golan which it occupies since 1967 contrary to the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly as well as international law;

Expressing concern over Israel's undermining of the Peace Process which was launched by the Madrid Conference on the basis of the Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, as well as the land-for-peace formula and the risks resulting from Israel's renegeing on the commitments and obligations reached,

1. *Lauds* the steadfastness of the Syrian Arab citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan against the occupation and their valiant resistance to Israel's repressive measures and against the continued attempts to undermine their attachment to their land and to their Syrian Arab identity, and *declares* its support for this steadfastness.
2. *Strongly condemns* Israel for its failure to comply with Security Council Resolution 497 (1981) and *reaffirms* that Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and has no legal validity whatsoever and that it constitutes a blatant violation of the UN Charter and relevant resolutions and the OIC Charter and resolutions, as well as the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in times of war dated 12 August 1949, the relevant provisions of the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, and the rules of international law, in particular the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force.
3. *Strongly condemns* Israel for its persistence in changing the legal status, demographic composition and institutional structure of the occupied Syrian Golan, and for its policy and practices particularly confiscating lands, appropriating water resources, establishing and expanding settlements and transferring settlers and immigrants thereto, exploiting their natural resources and establishing projects on them, and imposing an economic boycott of the agricultural products of the local population and prohibiting their exportation.
4. *Strongly condemns also* Israel's attempts to impose Israeli nationality and identity cards on the Syrian Arab citizens, as these measures constitute a flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Times of War of 1949 and the relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and other international bodies.

5. *Condemns* the repeated Israeli threats against Syria aiming at wrecking the peace process and escalating tension in the region.
6. *Reaffirms* that Israel's continued occupation of the Syrian Golan since 1967 and its annexation of it on 14 December 1981 constitute a permanent threat to peace and security in the region.
7. *Reaffirms also* the right of the Syrian Arab Republic to recover its full sovereignty over the occupied Golan.
8. *Demands* Israel to fully withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of the 4th of June 1967 in implementation of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and to begin demarcating that line.
9. *Also demands* Israel to fully respect all the foundations of the peace process as initiated in Madrid, consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the "land for peace" formula, and to abide by all the commitments and pledges reached so far.
10. *Demands anew* all states to stop providing Israel with any military, economic, financial, technological or humanitarian assistance that may extend Israeli occupation of Syrian Golan and encourage Israel to pursue its expansionist settlement policy.
11. *Urges* the Quartet and the international community to assume their responsibilities and compel Israel to implement the resolutions of international legality calling for total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from other occupied Arab lands, and to immediately start demarcating this line in order to achieve a durable and comprehensive peace in the region.
12. *Declares* its support for the firm position of Syria in its commitment to a durable and comprehensive peace in the region.
13. *Requests* the Secretary General to follow up on the implementation of this resolution, and to submit a report thereon to the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

RESOLUTION No. 3/33-PAL: ON ISRAEL'S CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF PARTS OF LEBANON AND DETENTION OF LEBANESE CITIZENS IN ITS JAILS AND DETENTION CAMPS

The Thirty-third Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 23 to 25 Jumada Awal, 1427H (19-21 June 2006),

Commending anew the steadfastness of Lebanon and the valor of its national resistance in achieving victory over the Israeli occupation forces and liberating most of its territories in the South and Western Bekaa;

Recalling the resolutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Islamic solidarity with Lebanon to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories in the South and West Bekaa;

Noting Israel's continued occupation of parts of Lebanese territories and positions along the Lebanese borders, its incomplete withdrawal from all Lebanese territories back to the internationally recognized borders in accordance with Security Council Resolution 425 (1978) and its continued violation of Lebanese airspace and plundering of their waters and soil;

Deeply concerned at Israel's continued arbitrary detention of Lebanese citizens in Israeli prisons and camps in flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Times of War of 1949, and the Hague Convention of 1907;

Noting with extreme concern and astonishment the ruling issued by the Israeli Supreme Court to allow the Israeli authorities to keep the Lebanese detainees in Israeli jails as "hostages and a card for compromise, and also to detain them without trial";

Recalling as well the resolutions of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on the suffering of Lebanese citizens in Israeli jails who experience difficult health and humanitarian conditions resulting in the death of a number of them;

Reaffirming Lebanon's right to compensation for the losses in human life, material damages and substantial economic losses it has sustained as a result of Israel's repeated aggressions against Lebanese citizens and infrastructure, and the ensuing damages and heavy loss of life and property,

1. *Expresses* anew its congratulations and appreciation to the President, government and people of the Republic of Lebanon, and *commends* the valiant Lebanese resistance as well as the

- admirable Lebanese steadfastness which repelled the Israeli forces from the South of Lebanon and the Western Bekaa.
2. *Strongly condemns* Israel for its continued aggression against the Lebanese territories and its daily violations of the Lebanese sovereignty by sea, by land and by air. It also condemns the recently uncovered Israeli conspiracy in mobilizing a terrorist network operating within the Lebanese territories and aiming to assassinate innocent citizens and undermine Lebanon's peace and stability. It also expresses in this context its solidarity with Lebanon.
 3. *Also strongly condemns* Israel for its continued occupation of positions on the internationally recognized Lebanese borders, and Lebanese territories, including the Shaba'a farms, in contravention of the provisions of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).
 4. *Reaffirms* its commitment to Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and *supports* Lebanon in its sovereign rights to exercise its political choices through its constitutional institutions, taking into consideration Lebanon's right to establish relations with brotherly and friendly States on the basis of mutual respect of each other's sovereignty and independence and of its national rights and the principles of good neighbourhood, equality and parity.
 5. *Supports* the Lebanese position calling for maintaining the United Nations troops working in Southern Lebanon without any decrease in their numbers or alteration in their mandate, especially in the light of the continuing Israeli threats, aggressions, and violations of the sovereignty of the Lebanese territories, air space, and territorial waters; and *mandates* the Islamic Group at the United Nations in New York to continue its efforts to mobilize support for the Lebanese position.
 6. *Supports* Lebanon in its endeavours to recover the Shabaa farms and the Lebanese Kfar Shoba hills, occupied by Israel, as envisioned under UN resolution No.425 of 1978, *supports also* the Lebanese Government's contacts to have the Lebanese character of the Shabaa farms confirmed and to have them defined in accordance with the procedures and principles followed and accepted at the UN, and *reiterates* the Lebanese people's right to resistance for the liberation of its land and the defense of its dignity in the face of the Israeli aggressions and ambitions.
 7. *Condemns* Israel for planting hundreds of thousands of mines in the Lebanese territories which it had occupied, and which caused, and continue to lead to, the death to tens of victims as well as substantial material losses. *Requests* the international community to bring its pressure to bear on Israel to hand over all maps of mines in Lebanon and *commends* the initiative of the State of the United Arab Emirates to remove these mines in cooperation and coordination with the Lebanese Government and the United Nations.
 8. *Considers* that uncovering the truth about the terrorist assassination crime which snatched the lives of late Prime Minister Mr. Rafik Al Harifi and his companions, and punishing the perpetrators, whoever they may be, would contribute to strengthened security and stability in Lebanon and in the region.
 9. *Urges* the international community, judiciary and political bodies and Member States to condemn Israel and bring pressure to bear on it to give compensation to Lebanon for the damages caused by Israeli repeated aggressions against Lebanese territories since the establishment of the State of Israel.
 10. *Welcomes* the Organizing of the national dialogue in Lebanon and the resolutions issued by the latter thus far, and supports the continuation of this dialogue such as to achieve a resolution of the issues on its agenda.
 11. *Also urges* the international community to take all necessary measures to compel Israel to immediately release all the remaining Lebanese prisoners and abductees detained in its prisons in implementation of the provisions of international law and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and the Hague Convention of 1907; and *urges* Member States and international organizations to exert pressure on Israel to allow representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations to visit Lebanese detainees in Israeli prisons on a regular basis, report on their conditions, and provide them with health and humanitarian care. Requests the adoption of a decision by international organizations, especially, the UN Commission on Human Rights, to conduct enquiries, imposed by international conventions, into the death of Lebanese detainees in Israeli prisons and detention camps, and force Israel to compensate those affected according to prevailing international laws.

12. *Reaffirms* the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties, *rejects* any attempts to resettle them in Lebanon and *warns* that failure to resolve their issue on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy particularly Resolution 194 of 1948 would undermine the security and stability of the region and impede the achievement of a durable and comprehensive peace therein. It also *welcomes* the Lebanese Government's decision to reopen the PLO Office and to set up a working group whose task would be to engage in bilateral talks with the Palestinian side to address the issues of livelihood, social, economic, legal and security matters of the Palestinian refugees within the camps or residing in Lebanon, in cooperation with UNRWA.
13. *Considers* that the achievement of a durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the appropriate way of achieving security and stability in the region. For this reason, it *calls upon* the international community, particularly the parties in the peace process - the United States and the Russian Federation - as well as the European Union and the United Nations, to play a more effective role in ensuring the success of the settlement issue in accordance with the Madrid Terms of Reference and the decisions of international legality, particularly Resolutions 242, 338 and 425.
14. *Considers* that the liberation of Lebanon from Israeli occupation is a victory for Lebanon, and that it constitutes a part of the liberation of occupied Arab territories which will only be complete with the prompt and full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan, back to the 4th of June 1967 borders, and with the securing of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland, Palestine and the establishment of their independent state on their national territory with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.
15. *Mandates* the OIC Secretary General to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and report thereon to the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

RESOLUTION No. 4/33-PAL: ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Thirty-third Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 23 to 25 Jumada Awal, 1427H (19-21 June 2006),

Referring to the Islamic Conference resolutions;

Having examined the grave situation resulting from the continued policies of successive Israeli governments hostile to peace,

1. *Reaffirms* its continued full solidarity with the Palestinian people for the recovery of their established and inalienable national rights, including their right to return, to self-determination, and to the establishment of their independent state on their national territory with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.
2. *Reaffirms* the total solidarity of the Islamic States with Syria and Lebanon to confront the continuous Israeli aggressions and threats against them, and invites all the Islamic States to express this solidarity in a practical manner and by the use of all means, as well as to stand firm with Syria and Lebanon against any Israeli aggressions targeting them.
3. *Reiterates* its adoption of the Arab peace initiative for settling the cause of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which was adopted by the 14th Arab Summit held in Beirut (Lebanon) on 28 March 2002; decides to act by all means and ways to promote this initiative, explain its dimensions and gain international support for its implementation.
4. *Reaffirms* also its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on Israel's implementation of the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 425, the principle of "land for peace", and the Madrid Conference Terms of Reference, which guarantee Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Syrian Golan, back to the 4th of June 1967 line and from the Lebanese territory still under occupation to the internationally recognized borders as well as securing the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights, including the right to return to their homes and properties in line with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 and to establish their independent state on their national territory

- with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. No party whatsoever has the right to make any amendment to any of the terms of reference which formed the basis of the peace process as a means to renege their obligations and commitments under these agreements.
5. *Rejects* the positions running counter to the rules of international legitimacy and the terms of reference of the peace process contained in the speeches made by the Israeli Prime Minister and the President of the United States in 14 April 2004, including those anticipating the outcomes of the negotiations on final settlement issues.
 6. *Invites* the Quartet to resume its diligent action forth achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of the peace process references represented in the relevant UN resolutions and the two principles of land for peace and the inadmissibility of the appropriation of others' land by the use of force, as well as on the basis of the Arab peace initiative and the Road Map.
 7. *Reiterates* the Islamic stand which rejects fragmentary solutions and the Israeli unilateral measures; and urges all States and international organizations not to recognize these fragmentary solutions and Israeli unilateral measures or entertain any guarantees or promises that may entail any detraction from the Palestinian people's legitimate rights or reward for the Israeli occupation which is trying to impose unilateral and segmented solutions through its persistent in expanding settlements and in erecting the Separation Wall in the occupied Palestinian territories including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its envious, in violation of the rules of international law and the fundamental references and foundations underpinning the peace process.
 8. *Strongly condemns* the Israeli government's policy and practices which are hostile to the peace process and are designed to undermine it through the continued colonization of Arab and Palestinian territories, including the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and also designed to invalidate the foundations and terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference, and evade the obligations, commitments and agreements reached in the past years of peace talks with the Palestinian and other Arab parties.
 9. *Invites* the OIC Member States which have already established, or started to take steps to establish relations with Israel in the framework of the Peace Process to sever these relations, including the closing of missions and offices, cutting economic ties and stopping all forms of normalization until Israel meticulously and genuinely implements UN resolutions on the Question of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, and until a just and comprehensive peace is established in the region.
 10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

RESOLUTION No. 5/33-PAL: ON THE MECHANISM FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The Thirty-third Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 23 to 25 Jumada Awal, 1427H (19-21 June 2006),

Proceeding from the principles and objectives of the OIC Charter,

Referring to the Islamic resolutions on the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly resolution No.9/1-P(IS) adopted by the 9th Islamic Summit Conference held in Doha and the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit held in Makkah Al Mukarramah which was held in December 2005.

Strongly condemning the crimes, terrorist practices and oppressive measures carried out by Israel, its insistence on expanding its settlement, its confiscation of land and property, its persistence in implementing collective punishment against the Palestinian people in all the occupied Arab territory, its siege of the Holy City of Al-Quds, and its violation of Islamic and Christians sanctities and values;

Recalling the resolutions adopted by the Extraordinary Arab Summit held in Cairo in October 2000, calling for the establishment of a mechanism for supporting the Palestinian people, for the preservation of the identity of Al-Quds, the consolidation of the self- capabilities of the Palestinian economy; further *Recalling*, the two resolutions adopted by the Arab Summit in Beirut (March 2002) and by the Arab Summit in Sharem El-Sheikh (February 2003) with respect to increasing the resources of both the Al-Aqsa

and Al-Quds Funds; *Recalling*, also, the resolution adopted at the Algiers Summit (March 2003) on expanding the resource base of the two Funds and inviting OIC Member States to join in their funding;

Commending the just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their national rights, and expressing its determination to support this struggle by all possible means to enable the Palestinians to overcome their predicament and achieve all their objectives;

Urging donor State and financing institutions to extend financial support to boost the resilience of the Palestinian people, to support economic and social development programmes in Palestine, and to extend aid for building a national self-sufficient economy, and to strengthen national institutions.

Expressing its thanks to those states that have extended assistance to the Palestinian people to help them overcome, their ordeal which has been further aggravated on account of Israel's continued withholding of the amounts due to the Palestinian national authority and the interruption of certain international parties' assistance.

1. *Condemns* the practices imposed by the Israel at the crossing points in the Gaza Strip and West Bank areas, in violation of the provision of the humanitarian international law and the crossing points agreement reached under the patronage of the Quartet. The Conference warns against the foolhardy continuation of imposing such abusive measures which affects the various aspects of the Palestinian people's daily life.
2. *Invites* Islamic financial and economic institutions to partake in the extension of their assistance in all possible form, to the Palestinian people and to intensify their efforts and programmes to extend financial and technical support to enhance the economic capabilities of the Palestinian people's institutions.
3. *Invites* those states and institutions that have suspended their assistance to the Palestinian people following the Palestinian legislative elections, to reconsider their stand and not to penalize the Palestinian people for its democratic elections, and *urges* them to reinstitute their assistance to the Palestinian people and to its national authority and to help them build their country's economy.
4. *In implementation* of the provisions of the Final Communiqué issued by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit, the Conference *invites* the Member States and the Muslim peoples to support the Al-Quds Fund through the contribution of one US Dollar by each Muslim, so as to assist the Palestinian people in the face of their ordeal and for the maintenance of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Islamic holy places and for the preservation of the Arabo-Islamic character of the city of Al-Quds.
5. *Commends* the efforts of the Supreme Council and the Administrative Committee of the Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds funds and the Islamic Development Bank, both with respect to the management of the Funds and with regard to the management of its own financial resources to activate the financial support mechanisms for the benefit of the Palestinian people, to finance the equipping and construction of health and educational facilities.
6. *Calls* on these Member States which have yet to accede to both Funds to do so and appeals to voluntary institutions and donors to use the technical capacity as well as contracting and payment mechanisms set up by the Islamic Development Bank to finance programmes and projects that would meet the vital needs of the Palestinian people and ensure the spending of these resources in accordance with the best professional standards and practices.
7. *Entrusts* the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank to hold urgent talks so as to seek financial support from those Member States which have yet to announce their intentions to contribute to the two funds.
8. *Requests* the Secretary General to follow up the implementation of this resolution and to report thereon to the Thirty-fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

RESOLUTION No.6/33-IBO: ON THE ISLAMIC OFFICE FOR THE BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

The Thirty-third Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, (Session of Harmony of Rights, Freedoms and Justice), held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan from 23 to 25 Jumada Awal, 1427H (19-21 June 2006),

Proceeding from the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference,

Based on all the relevant Islamic resolutions, in particular RES.7/32-IBO issued by the 32nd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Session of Integration and Development) which was held on 21-23 Jumad al Awal 1426H (28-30 June 2005),

Mindful of the existing cooperation between the Islamic Office for the Boycott of Israel at the OIC General Secretariat and the Arab Office for the Boycott of Israel at the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, for the purpose of achieving optimal implementation of the principles and provisions of the Boycott of Israel,

Having considered the report of the Secretary General on the Islamic Office for the Boycott of Israel,
Decides to:

1. Invite the Member States to issue internal legislations to govern the Islamic Boycott action against Israel.
2. Invite those Member States that have not set up regional Islamic boycott offices in their countries, to do so as soon as possible, to designate directors for these offices and to nominate liaison officers for them.
3. Endorse the recommendations issued by the Ninth Conference of Liaison Officers of the Islamic Offices for the Boycott of Israel, held at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah on 13-15 Safar 1427 H (13-15 March 2006).
4. Commend the cooperation existing between the Arab and Islamic Offices for the Boycott of Israel, for the purpose of achieving maximum efficiency in the implementation of the Islamic States boycott of Israel.
5. Request the Secretary General to follow up the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the Thirty Fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.



FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 33rd SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS (SESSION OF HARMONY OF RIGHTS, FREEDOMS AND JUSTICE), BAKU, REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, 19-21 JUNE 2006 [EXCERPTS]

[...]

10. After considering the reports of the Secretary-General and in light of the brilliant statements made and the constructive discussions that took place among the Ministers and Heads of Delegation, the Conference adopted a number of resolutions as follows:
11. The Conference reiterated that the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif is the central cause of the Islamic World and stressed the necessity of countering the perils of judaization to which the sacred city is subjected as a consequence of the policies and measures carried out by the Israeli occupation authorities aimed at isolating Al-Quds Al-Sharif from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories by building the racist Separation Wall, confiscating lands, demolishing homes and expanding colonies around the Holy City. The Conference invited the Member States to support and strengthen the steadfastness of Palestinian citizens in the occupied City of Al-Quds.
12. The Conference affirmed its full support and backing for the Palestinian people in strengthening their national unity and unifying their internal front; and expressed its support for the Palestinian national dialogue efforts and for its steadfastness in the face of the practices of Israeli occupation authorities.
13. The Conference commended the Palestinian legislative elections, which reaffirmed that the Palestinian people deserve their right to self-determination and to establish their independent State. It called upon the international community to respect the democratic choice made by the Palestinian people, and expressed full support for the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian national dialogue aimed at affirming the unity of the Palestinian rank and finding the effective ways and means of establishing the independent Palestinian State and achieving peace on the two States basis, pursuant to the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab peace initiative and the roadmap.
14. The Conference condemned the Israeli measures imposed at the crossings in Gaza Strip and the West Bank in violation of the provisions of the international humanitarian law and the Agreement on Crossings reached under the aegis of the Quartet. The Conference condemned Israel for seizing the Palestinian National Authority's funds and warned against further imposition of such arbitrary measures which affect the various aspects of the daily lives of the Palestinian people.

15. The Conference expressed its appreciation for the role played by the Islamic States in supporting the Palestinian people, and called upon the Member States and the financial funds to provide more support to help the Palestinian people cope with the economic embargo imposed on them and avoid a humanitarian disaster in the occupied Palestinian territories.
16. The Conference also called upon the States and bodies that have stopped their assistance to the Palestinian people after the Palestinian legislative elections to review their positions and not to punish the Palestinian people for their democratic choices. It also urged them to renew their assistance to the Palestinian people and their national authority.
17. The Conference reaffirmed the need to put an end to the Israeli occupation of all the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan and the remaining occupied Lebanese territories.
18. The Conference affirmed the necessity of reaching a just resolution of the Palestinian question in all its aspects on the basis of international law and legality, and the agreed references, such as the relevant UN resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the impermissibility of occupying others' land by force, the Arab peace initiative, and the roadmap, so as to enable the Palestinian people to achieve their national independence and exercise their sovereignty over their State of Palestine, with Al Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.
19. The Conference affirmed the illegality of the Israeli laws and practices in Eastern Al-Quds, aimed at annexing, judaizing and changing the demographic and geographic character of the city. It requested States and international institutions and bodies to abide by international resolutions on the City of Al-Quds as an integral part of the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967, and called on them not to participate in any meeting or activity that serves Israel's objectives in establishing its occupation and annexation of the Holy City.
20. The Conference reaffirmed the need to find a just solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the UN resolutions, particularly UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948), and reiterated its rejection of all forms of resettlement.
21. The Conference called upon the Quartet to resume serious work in order to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East in accordance with the Roadmap and the Arab peace initiative; and affirmed its rejection of the partial solutions and the unilateral measures which Israel has taken or intends to take in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including the city of Al-Quds, in an attempt to anticipate the outcome of the negotiations on final settlement issues and the unilateral demarcation of Israel's borders, as these fulfill its expansionist designs and destroy any chances for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State.
22. The Conference affirmed its condemnation of Israel for its continued colonization of Palestinian territories through all forms of settlement activity, and requested the UN Security Council to work toward their immediate ending and to remove the existing settlements in accordance with UNSC Resolution 465 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Conference called upon the UN Security Council also to reinvigorate the International Supervisory and Monitoring Committee in order to prevent settlement in al-Quds and the other occupied Arab territories in accordance with UNSC Resolution 446.
23. The Conference strongly condemned Israel for its intention to build a housing settlement in the Old City of occupied Al-Quds. It made an urgent appeal to the UN Security Council and the Quartet to immediately act in order to dissuade Israel from executing its plans to judaize occupied Al-Quds and create realities on the ground which constitutes a flagrant violation of the international legitimacy and the Fourth Geneva Conventions as well as the agreements signed with the Palestinian side.
24. The Conference called upon the Member States to commemorate the criminal attempt to burn down the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and to mark 21 August of every year as the Day of Islamic Solidarity with Al-Quds and Palestine.
25. The Conference requested the international community to counter the construction of the racist separation wall and its damaging impacts on the Palestinian people and on their land, waters and borders, and to stop the construction of the wall and remove the existing parts thereof. It invited all States of the world to impose punitive measures against the bodies and companies contributing to the construction of the wall and against settlers, settlement products and all those making profit from any settlement activity on the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds, in implementation of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the UN General Assembly Resolution ES-10/15.

26. The Conference condemned Israel for the excavation works around and beneath the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque and for willfully destroying cultural and heritage sites in Al Quds, Nablus and Al-Khaleel (Hebron), and commended the initiative of the Director General of UNESCO concerning the preservation of the historical heritage of the city of Al Quds. In this regard, it resolved to coordinate between the OIC General Secretariat and UNESCO, and invited the Member States to support this initiative and help implement it.
27. The Conference strongly condemned the continuous threats against Islamic and Christian holy places, particularly the threats to storm and damage the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque, and held Israel, the “occupying power”, fully responsible for the consequences of these aggressions, particularly as they happen under the eyes and protection of Israeli occupation forces. It condemned terrorism exercised by settler gangs against Palestinian civilians and peace activists coming from all parts of the world to show solidarity with the Palestinian people.
- [...]
110. The Conference condemned the acts of demolition and destruction of Palestinian houses, institutions, facilities and lands causing severe losses to the Palestinian economy, expressed its deep concern over the disastrous economic repercussions of these ongoing aggressive practices of the Israeli government, and called for their immediate cessation. It also appealed for assistance to the Palestinian people to help them rebuild their national economy, to strengthen their national institutions, and to establish their independent state, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. It reiterated its commendation in this connection of the initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to create two funds to support Palestine with a donation of USD250 million and called for financial support to these funds.
111. The Conference strongly condemned Israeli practices and their impacts on the environment in the occupied Palestinian and Syrian territories, and the occupied Lebanese territories, and stressed the need for cooperation and adoption of effective measures to protect the environment which is essential for the sustainable development of the Member States.
- [...]
130. The Conference recommended that every kind of financial and academic support and assistance should be extended to Palestinian universities so that they can play their national and educational role.
131. The Conference appealed to Member States to support the efforts of the Palestine Liberation Organization to promote education in the Palestinian territories under its National Authority during the transitional period, and to provide it with all technical and financial means to develop curricula for all educational levels and meet its obligations.
132. The Conference called upon Member States to extend every necessary financial assistance to provide the funding required for the promotion of education in the occupied territories in general and in the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif in particular, in view of the great difficulties facing education in the Holy City, on account of the practices of the Israeli occupation authorities, such as imposing its educational curricula and closing
133. The Conference strongly condemned Israel for the construction of the separation wall, the so-called “Jerusalem Envelope” that seeks to isolate the City of Al-Quds by severing it from its Arab-Palestinian environment and Judaizing it through the obliteration of its historical, cultural and civilizational features.



DECLARATION OF THE EU-US SUMMIT, VIENNA, 21 JUNE 2006

VIENNA SUMMIT DECLARATION

We, the leaders of the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (U.S.), met today in Vienna to respond to the concerns of our citizens for peace, security, stability and prosperity in an increasingly globalised world.

We welcome that over the past year our Transatlantic Partnership has delivered real results as shown by the political and economic Progress Reports we issued today. We remain committed to finding common or complementary lines of action in many areas. Over the last year there have been many examples of how productive our relationship is, in the Middle East, Iran, the Western Balkans, Belarus, on the frozen conflicts, and Sudan, as well as in our efforts to promote transatlantic trade and investment under last Summit's Economic Initiative.

We have decided to further strengthen our strategic Partnership by adopting a number of priority actions to support our cooperation in the following four areas:

- Promoting peace, human rights and democracy worldwide;
- Confronting global challenges, including security;
- Fostering prosperity and opportunity;
- Promoting strategic cooperation on energy and energy security, climate change and sustainable development.

Promoting Peace, Human Rights and Democracy Worldwide

[...]We will continue to support reform in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East and will promote greater participation of civil society in the reform process through our respective efforts, including the Barcelona Process, the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, and our joint actions through the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative and the Foundation and Fund for the Future.

We will continue to closely cooperate in the Middle East, notably through the Quartet.

We welcome the temporary international mechanism to deliver assistance directly to the Palestinian people. We will continue to deliver humanitarian assistance and promote Palestinian democracy and civil society. Whilst recalling President Abbas' commitment to a platform of peace, we will continue to urge the new Palestinian government to commit to non-violence, recognise Israel's right to exist and accept existing agreements and obligations. We will continue to call on Israel to ease restrictions on access and movement and to take additional steps including with respect to the Palestinian tax and customs revenues, to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. We remind both sides of their obligations under the 15 November 2005 Agreement. We will continue to promote a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the Roadmap in order to advance a just, viable and lasting two-state solution and we call on both parties to avoid unilateral measures that prejudice final status issues. We call on the Palestinian Authority government to implement policies that will permit the international community to provide greater support to and review its policies on contact with the Palestinian Authority.

We will strongly urge Syria to implement United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1559, 1595, 1636, 1680 and 1686 and to prevent its territory from being used to support violence in Iraq, and end cross-border transit and support for terrorist groups.

Similarly, Syria must end its support for Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and prevent the smuggling of arms and other support to these groups. We will work together to increase support for human rights and democracy, and secure the release of political prisoners in Syria. We will strongly urge Syria to refrain from any attempt at destabilising Lebanon. [...]

Regional issues

We have seen a period of profound and rapid change in the Middle East with the Gaza disengagement followed by elections in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Israel.

The European Union and the United States have held regular consultations, in particular within the Quartet, on the evolving situation. Hamas' election victory in the Palestinian elections means we are

faced with an entirely new situation, reinforcing the need for close EU-U.S. co-operation. This was in evidence in the successful conclusion of negotiations to open the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, an agreement overseen by EU monitors and reinforced by assistance to Palestinian customs. On Syria/Lebanon, we have developed a joint policy within the UN aimed at ending Syria's interference in Lebanon, and we have maintained parallel pressure on Damascus to comply with the requests by the UNSC in connection with the murder of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. We have worked together to prepare the international conference in support of the Lebanese reform programme. On the Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative, launched by the G8, we have worked together to produce concrete results in the Forum for the Future meetings, launching or supporting a number of initiatives such as the Foundation for the Future and the Fund for the Future, and initiatives supporting civil society organisations and educational reforms.



**FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER PHILIPPE DOUSTE-BLAZY,
SPEECH ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, PARIS, 22 JUNE 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

[...] I'd like to set out to you in more detail the current situation and the initiatives conducive to finding a way out of the crisis, but let me first remind you of the basic factors which explain the specific position of France and the European Union. France maintains close historical and political ties with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, very probably because our country has both the largest Jewish and Arab-Muslim communities in Europe.

Our position is clear: resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the key to stability in the Middle East and can be achieved only by guaranteeing Israel's security and recognizing the Palestinians' legitimate right to self-determination.

Since the signature of the Oslo Accords, France has worked unstintingly for the creation of a viable Palestinian State, living in peace alongside Israel. She had, moreover, advocated the creation of this State in the Knesset back in 1982. Twenty years later, in July 2002, she was behind the Seville European Council's adoption of a declaration acknowledging the Palestinians' right to establish a State on the basis of the 1967 borders.

Our country is committed to a legalistic position: we're arguing for the conflict to be dealt with in the framework of the relevant United Nations resolutions. Indeed, the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and General Assembly form a political and legal corpus outlining a settlement of the conflict. I'm thinking of General Assembly Resolution 181, adopted in 1947, which defines the plan for partitioning Palestine, of UNSCR 242, adopted on 22 November 1967 following the Six-Day War, and UNSCR 1515 of 19 November 2003, which approves the Quartet's Roadmap and asks the parties to cooperate on its implementation in order to reach a definitive settlement of the conflict.

Over and above the efforts of France herself, the European Union has a considerable role in this connection because of its ties with the Middle East. It is Israel's leading trading partner, well ahead of the United States, and the leading investor in Israel and the leading contributor to cooperation projects, essentially in the Palestinian Territories, with €280 million in 2004 alone.

Politically, its contribution is equally remarkable, witness the positions it has consistently adopted over the years, from the Venice Declaration in 1980 to the Berlin Declaration in 1999. And its enlargement has bolstered this contribution, the Europeans being chiefly responsible for the establishment of the Quartet and the implementation of the Roadmap. The EU has also played a major role in the Palestinian reforms and the orderly conduct of the latest elections in the Territories. It is now thinking about establishing a mechanism to enable international aid to be delivered to the Palestinian people.

The European Union has two objectives: to actually achieve the establishment of a viable, democratic Palestinian State, and to guarantee Israel's security. These objectives are motivating it to promote the

development of relations both with Israel and with the Palestinian Authority, and to supply humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Territories.

Strategically, the EU has developed specific instruments: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership launched at the Barcelona Conference in 1995 and the European Neighbourhood Policy launched in the context of enlargement, which facilitated the conclusion of strengthened association agreements with Israel in 2000 and with the Palestinian Territories in 1997. The Solana Plan, adopted on 5 November 2004, provides for action in four areas: security, Palestinian Authority reforms, elections and economic reconstruction. Accordingly, the EU lent its support to the organization of the Palestinian elections in 2005 and the reforms designed to strengthen the rule of law and improve the administration. Within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy, it has deployed missions on the ground to support the reform of the Palestinian civil police force and assist the Rafah border controls.

All these actions paved the way for further advances: the Oslo Accords, the negotiations at Camp David and Taba, where peace seemed to be so close, the adoption of the Roadmap, still the only international peace plan recognized by both parties, and the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005.

Although these were important advances, they did not bring the peace process to a successful conclusion. The conflict reached a new impasse with the Hamas victory in the parliamentary elections on 25 January and formation of a new Palestinian government, not to mention Israel's temptation to take unilateral action since her disengagement from the Gaza Strip. In short, the situation is extremely worrying. Acts of violence now occur almost every day. In the Palestinian Territories, the Hamas-led government stands firm on its rejection of the principles laid down by the Quartet – renunciation of violence and recognition of the State of Israel and the agreements concluded between Israel and the PLO. This regrettable position is fuelling tensions between Palestinians which could lead to the fragmentation of the Territories and splits in the institutions. Admittedly, the various Palestinian parties are now beginning to engage in dialogue but the outcome is still uncertain. The referendum proposed by President Mahmoud Abbas may halt the crisis but it may equally well accelerate it.

Israel would like to give the negotiations a chance. But the heavy shelling of populated areas with its trail of Palestinian civilian casualties, continued building of settlements particularly around Jerusalem and planned completion of the security wall following a route the international community considers illegal continue to stir up tension on the ground.

The lack of trust between the parties is now so great that it seems difficult to envisage negotiations at least in the short term. There is increasing support for unilateralism, both in Israel and on the Palestinian side. This position is paving the way for future violence in the Middle East and also on European territory.

Against this difficult background, the international community has the duty to act. It must, first, prevent the collapse of the Palestinian Authority and deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Territories. President Chirac made it clear that the international aid must reach the Palestinian people, both for humanitarian reasons and as a matter of justice. Action had to be taken to prevent a serious crisis in the Territories, especially as the international community - not Hamas - would have been blamed for it. So the European Union has drawn up a temporary assistance mechanism to enable the Territories to receive the necessary funds. The mechanism was approved by the Quartet, and the European Council agreed on 15 and 16 June to unblock a "package" of some €100 million, thus demonstrating the Europeans' commitment. This will enable the Palestinians to receive three kinds of aid: essential supplies for health services and education, energy supplies and a "social security safety net" in the form of direct payments to Palestinians in need.

I am very pleased that the EU has enabled the Quartet to take this decision which will, among other things, enable hospital staff to be paid. This mechanism satisfies strategic, economic and moral considerations. If we want to relaunch the peace process and promote the establishment of a Palestinian State, the structures of the Palestinian Authority must be preserved. We must also support a popula-

tion who continue to depend on international assistance. And lastly it is important not to exacerbate the tensions and also to retain advocates of a moderate line within the Palestinian population.

However, none of that has led to any shift in our political position vis-à-vis Hamas and the government of the Palestinian Authority. It must commit to the three principles laid down by the Quartet, which are non-negotiable.

The international community must also actively encourage an effective and realistic relaunch of the peace process. We now face the double challenge posed by the complete lack of trust between the parties and the temptation to take unilateral action. However, the European Union's long-standing ties in the region give it a special ability to act. To keep this room for manoeuvre, it must maintain a balanced and dynamic approach to the situation. The EU must repeat clearly that it rejects terrorism. It must also make it clear that it rejects all unilateralist action and restate its commitment to negotiation as the only way of settling the conflict. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's visit to Paris on 14 and 15 June afforded an opportunity to reiterate these requirements.

There is no single solution to the present crisis but there is one imperative: to bring the parties to the negotiating table. The organization of an international conference on the final status of the Palestinian Territories would relaunch the dialogue. France and the European Union must be prepared to promote such an initiative, which would offer the Palestinians and Israel new political prospects. Indeed, a way out of the present crisis has to be found and we intend making active efforts to this end.

Now more than ever, our country, with the European Union, has got to redouble efforts to advance the cause of stability and peace in the Middle East. It is our duty. It is our country's mission to help to find the way forward in this part of the world which has for too long been battered by violence and hatred. It is for France to keep hope alive in the face of what is still a major challenge. It is up to us to make our voice and the voice of Europe heard; to maintain our position on the international stage to ensure that the values of dialogue and respect prevail, values we relentlessly defend and which are essential to put an end to this conflict. [...]



**CHRISTIAN LAITY COMMITTEE, REGARDING A PROPOSED
US HOUSE RESOLUTION, 24 JUNE 2006**

[On 6 June 2006, Texas congressman Michael McCaul submitted a draft resolution to the US Congress condemning the persecution of Palestinian Christians by the PA (see document above dated 6 June 2006); this letter came in response to that resolution.]

Dear Fellow Americans, People and Representatives

Re: In response to the Congress proposed resolution on Palestinian Christians

We have read the Congress' proposed resolution regarding the plight of the Palestinian Christians. Though we are very encouraged by the interest shown by Congressmen on the difficulties and problems faced by the world's oldest Christian community, we, however, are dismayed by this resolution purporting to act on our behalf. The resolution has been drafted without any consultation with the Christians of the region, and seems designed to mislead Congress as to the real threat that faces our community.

The issue of Christian emigration from the birth place of Christianity is very disturbing and threatens the existence of indigenous Christians who have been safeguarding sacred Christian traditions for centuries. It is misleading however, to relate this issue to the Muslim-Christian relationship in the occupied Palestinian territory. The strongest factors explaining the conditions of the Christian Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) are tied to policies and practices of the Israeli government in the OPT.

Like their fellow Muslim Palestinians, Christians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip suffer from the 38 year-long Israeli occupation of their lands, and its subsequent policies, many of which are in violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Israeli barrier, for example, is built on privately-owned Palestinian land within Bethlehem. This 8-meter high concrete wall, did not only result in encaging Bethlehem and making it an open air prison but it has also resulted in the loss of most of Bethlehem's arable lands and many of our major landmarks. It has severed Bethlehem from Jerusalem, two cities that have historically enjoyed inter-dependent kinship, trade and social relations. Due to Israel's measures, the majority of Palestinian Christians are unable to access Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and are, therefore, denied their basic right of freedom of worship.

We urge you to vote down this resolution and to engage proactively with our plight. Christian Palestinians are grateful to those who, in good faith, take measures to protect their basic rights. However, the most severe violations of Christian Palestinian rights stem from Israel's policies and practices in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Accordingly, the greatest support to Christian Palestinians is support that aims to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territory.



**ISRAELI POLITICAL-SECURITY CABINET, DECISIONS FOLLOWING THE
ABDUCTION OF SOLDIER GILAD SHALIT, JERUSALEM, 25 JUNE 2006**

The Political-Security Cabinet convened this afternoon (Sunday), 25.6.06, and made the following decisions:

1. Israel views the terrorist incident that occurred today with utmost severity. The Palestinian Authority (PA) - the PA Chairman and the PA government - is responsible for the event with all this implies.
2. Israel will take all necessary actions in order to bring about the release of abducted soldier Cpl. Gilad Shalit. This objective has top priority and, to this end, the Cabinet approves all the preparations that were presented to it by the security establishment.
3. The PA will bear full responsibility for any harm to Cpl. Shalit. No person or organization will have immunity at this time.
4. The Cabinet approves the security establishment's recommendations to prepare and deploy the necessary forces in order to be ready for urgent military action as obligated by the PA's actions and intentions.
5. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Defense Minister Amir Peretz will decide to approve actions against targets among the terrorist organizations and the PA according to the recommendations of the security establishment.
6. Contacts will continue with the international community in order to maintain the international pressure on the PA leadership with the objective of bringing about Cpl. Shalit's release.
7. Prime Minister Olmert's Media Adviser Asaf Shariv will coordinate the media and the information campaign regarding both Cpl. Shalit's abduction and actions designed to bring about his release (the Prime Minister's Office, the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry, the IDF and the security services).



**PALESTINIAN NATIONAL DIALOGUE, NATIONAL CONCILIATION DOCUMENT
OF THE PRISONERS (REVISED VERSION), 28 JUNE 2006**

[See also the original document – entry above dated 11 May 2006.]

*In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful,
"Abide by the decree of God and never disperse" (a verse from the Holy Quran)*

Based on the high sense of historical national responsibility and in light of the dangers facing our people *and based on the principle saying that rights don't fall by law of limitations, and on the basis of no recognition of the legitimacy of occupation and for the sake of reinforcing the internal Palestinian front and maintain and protect the national unity and the unity of our people in the homeland and in the Diaspora and in order to confront the Israeli scheme that aims to impose the Israeli solution and to blow up the dream and right of our people in establishing their independent state with full sovereignty; this scheme that the Israeli government intends to execute in the next phase based on concluding the apartheid wall and the Judaization of Jerusalem and expansion of the Israeli settlements and the seizure of the Jordan Valley and the annexation of large areas from the West Bank and blocking the path in front of our people in exercising their right in return.*

...towards safeguarding the accomplishments of our people throughout this long struggle and out of loyalty to our martyrs, prisoners and our injured and given that we are still in the a phase of liberation, (omitted: "*with nationalism and democracy as the basic features*") this necessitates that we formulate a political strategy. Therefore, with the goal of making our comprehensive national dialogue a success, based on the Cairo Declaration and coupled with the urgent need for unity and solidarity, we put forth this document (the national conciliation document) to our people, President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), the PLO leadership, Prime Minister Ismail Hanieh, the Council of Ministers, the Speaker and members of the PNC, the Speaker and members of the PLC, all Palestinian forces and factions, all nongovernmental and popular organizations and institutions and to the popular leadership of the Palestinians in the homeland and in the Diaspora.

This document is being put forth as a complete package and the introduction is part of it:

1. The Palestinian people in the homeland and in the Diaspora seek and struggle to liberate their land and *remove the settlements and evacuate the settlers and remove the apartheid and annexation and separation wall and to achieve their right to freedom, return and independence and to exercise their right to self-determination, including the right to establish their independent state with al-Quds al-Shareef as its capital on all territories occupied in 1967, and to secure the right of return for refugees to their homes and properties from which they were evicted and to compensate them and to liberate all prisoners and detainees without any discrimination and all of this is based on the historical right of our people on the land of our forefathers and based on the UN Charter and international law and legitimacy in a way that does not affect the rights of our people.*
2. To speed up efforts to achieve that which was agreed on in Cairo in March 2005 pertaining to the development and reactivation of the PLO and the participation of all forces and factions to it according to democratic principles that reinforce the status of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people wherever they are in a manner that meets with the changes on the Palestinian arena and in a manner that consolidates the authority of the PLO to assume its responsibilities in leading our people in the homeland and the Diaspora. The PLO should also be the body that mobilizes the people in defending their national, political and humanitarian rights in the various fora and circles and in the international and regional arenas. Furthermore, our national interest stipulates the formation of a new Palestinian National Council before the end of 2006 in a manner that secures the representation of all Palestinian national and Islamic forces, factions and parties and all sectors of our people through elections, where possible, according to proportional representation, and through agreement where it is not possible to hold elections according to mechanisms set up by the Higher Committee resulting from the Cairo Dialogue. The PLO therefore, will remain a broad front and framework and a comprehensive national coalition and the higher political reference for all the Palestinians in the homeland and in the Diaspora.
3. The right of the Palestinian people to resist and to uphold the option of resistance of occupation by various means and focusing resistance in territories occupied in 1967 in tandem with political action, negotiations and diplomacy whereby there is broad participation from all sectors in the popular resistance.
4. To formulate a Palestinian plan aimed at comprehensive political action; to unify Palestinian political discourse on the basis of the Palestinian national goals as mentioned in this document and according to Arab legitimacy and international legitimacy resolutions that grant justice to the Pales-

- tinian people maintaining their rights and constants to be implemented by the PLO leadership and its institutions, and the PNA represented in president and government, the national and Islamic factions, the civil society organizations and public figures. This is aimed at mobilizing Arab, Islamic and international political, financial, economic and humanitarian support and solidarity with our people and the PNA and to gain support for the right of our people to self-determination, freedom, return and independence; furthermore, it is aimed at confronting Israel's plan to impose any unilateral solution on our people and to confront the oppressive siege.
5. To protect and support the PNA since it is the nucleus of the future state and was born of the struggle and sacrifices of the Palestinian people; to stress that higher national interests call for respecting the "Basic Law" of the PNA and the effective laws and for respecting the responsibilities and authorities of the president elected according to the will of the Palestinian people through free, honest and democratic elections. It also calls for respecting the responsibilities and authorities of the government granted by a vote of confidence from the PLC which came through free and honest and democratic elections and stress on the importance and need for creative cooperation between the presidency and the government; there should be joint action and regular meetings between them to achieve and reinforce cooperation and integration according to the provisions of the Basic Law and the higher national interests and for the need for comprehensive reforms in PNA institutions, especially the judiciary whereby the judiciary authority should be respected at all levels, its rulings implemented reinforce the rule of the law.
 6. To work on forming a national unity government that secures the participation of parliamentary blocs and political forces interested in participating on the basis of this document and the joint program to upgrade the Palestinian situation at the local, Arab, regional and international levels. Their goal is also to implement the reform program and develop the national economy and encourage investment and fight poverty and unemployment and provide best possible care for the sectors that carried the burden of steadfastness, resistance and the Intifada and who were the victims of the Israeli aggression. In particular, this refers to the families of martyrs, prisoners and injured and the owners of demolished homes and properties, destroyed by the occupation, and the unemployed and graduates.
 7. Administration of the negotiations falls within the jurisdiction of the PLO and the President of the PNA, which will be on the basis of adhering to Palestinian national goals as mentioned in this document on condition that any agreement must be presented to the new PNC for ratification *or a general referendum to be held in the homeland and the Diaspora through organizing the referendum. (replaces "to hold a general referendum wherever it is possible")*
 8. Liberation of the prisoners and detainees is a sacred national duty that must be assumed by all Palestinian national and Islamic forces and factions, the PLO and the PNA represented in President and government, the PLC and all resistance forces.
 9. Stressing on the need to double our efforts to support and care for the refugees and defend their rights and work on holding a popular conference representing the refugees that would create commissions to carry out duties towards the refugees and to stress on the right of return; the international community should also be pressured to implement Resolution 194 which stipulates the right of refugees to return and to be compensated.
 10. To work on forming a unified resistance front called the "Palestinian Resistance Front" to lead and engage in resistance against the occupation and to unify and coordinate resistance action and work on defining a unified political reference for the front.
 11. To cling to the principles of democracy and to hold regular, general, free and honest democratic elections according to the law for the presidency, the PLC and the local and municipal councils and trade unions and federations and to respect the principle of a peaceful and smooth transfer of authority and to stress on the principle of separation of authorities; the Palestinian democratic experience should be protected and any democratic choice and its results respected; furthermore, there should be respect for the rule of the law, public and fundamental freedoms, freedom of the press and equality among the citizens in rights and duties without discrimination; the achievements of women should be respected and further developed and promoted.
 12. To reject and denounce the oppressive siege on the Palestinian people being led by the US and Israel and to call on the Arabs at the popular and official levels to support the Palestinian people, the PLO and the PNA and to call on the Arab governments to implement the political, financial, economic, and media decisions of the Arab summits that support the Palestinian people and their

national cause; to stress that the PNA is committed to the Arab consensus and to joint Arab action *that supports our just cause and the higher Arab interests.*

13. To call on the Palestinian people to strive for unity and solidarity, to unify their ranks and to support the PLO and PNA represented in president and government; to endorse *the people's* steadfastness and resistance in the face of Israeli aggression and siege and to reject any interference in internal Palestinian affairs.
14. To denounce all forms of division that could lead to internal strife; to condemn the use of weapons in settling internal disputes and to ban the use of weapons among the people; to stress on the sanctity of Palestinian blood and to adhere to dialogue as the sole means of resolving disagreements. There should be freedom of expression through ["all" is omitted] the media, which also applies to any party in opposition to the authority and its decisions in accordance with the law; adherence to the right to peaceful protest and to organize marches, demonstrations and sit-ins on condition that they be peaceful and unarmed and do not attack the property of citizens or public property.
15. The national interest necessitates the need to find the best means of allowing our people and their political forces in the Gaza Strip to participate in the battle for freedom, return and independence while bearing in mind the new situation in Gaza strip as true elevation and power for the steadfastness of our people and on the base of using the struggle methods of resisting the occupation while taking into consideration the higher interests of our people.
16. The need to reform and develop the Palestinian security system in all its branches in a modern manner that allows them to assume their responsibilities in defending the homeland and people and in confronting the aggression and the occupation; their duties also include maintaining security and public order, enforcing laws, ending the state of security chaos and lawlessness, ending the public show of arms and parades and confiscating any weapons that harm the resistance and distort its image or those that threaten the unity of Palestinian society; there is also a need to coordinate and organize the relationship between the security forces and the resistance and organize and protect their weapons.
17. To call on the PLC to continue issuing laws that regulate the work of the security apparatus in its various branches and to work towards issuing a law that bans the exercise of political and partisan action by members of the security services whereby they are required to abide by the elected political reference as defined by law.
18. To work on expanding the role and presence of international solidarity committees and peace-loving groups that support our people in their just struggle against the occupation, settlements and the apartheid wall both politically and locally; to work towards the implementation of the International Court of Justice ruling at The Hague pertaining to the dismantlement of the wall and settlements and their illegitimate presence.



**GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL, REACTION TO THE PALESTINIAN
'PRISONERS' DOCUMENT' ('A TEXT ANALYSIS'), 29 JUNE 2006**

The objective behind this document had nothing to do with advancing prospects for peace with Israel. The goal was to promote a Palestinian consensus.

1. The announcement by representatives of Hamas and Fatah that agreement had been reached on this document has been perceived by some as being "a step in the right direction" in terms of efforts to achieve peace between the Palestinians and Israel. In reality, it constitutes a step in the wrong direction.
2. The objective behind this document had nothing to do with advancing prospects for peace with Israel. The goal was to address internal Palestinian interests, promote a Palestinian consensus, and avoid a decline into confrontation between the various Palestinian factions.
3. The document fails to meet the requirements of the Roadmap and the three basic conditions of the Quartet: recognition of Israel's right to exist, ending terrorism, and adherence to all existing agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

4. Explicitly supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state within all the territories "occupied since 1967" does not mean recognition of Israel.

The document makes no mention of explicitly recognizing Israel and Israel's right to exist, and also no mention is made of ending the conflict with Israel.

The document further insists on full implementation of the Palestinian demands regarding the "right of return" of all Palestinian refugees to their homes [inside Israel]. This in itself constitutes a formula for the ultimate destruction of Israel and stands in contradiction to the two-state solution, whereby the Palestinian state would become the home for Palestinian refugees.

The formula used by the document goes hand-in-hand with the Hamas declarations that after a full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories "occupied since 1967", Hamas would be prepared at most for a lengthy ceasefire, but not for recognition of Israel.

5. The document expresses a clear-cut support for continued terrorism.

Not only does it not talk about ending terrorism, but it stresses the "right of resistance by all means."

The document talks about "concentrating" such "resistance" within the territories. In other words, while the majority of terrorist attacks would take place within the West Bank and Gaza, at least some terrorist attacks could and would take place within Israel itself.

Moreover, the document makes no distinction between attacks against civilians and attacks against military targets.

6. While stating that decisions of the Arab League and the international community ("Arab legitimacy and resolutions of international legitimacy") would be the basis for the Palestinian political action plan, the document makes clear that it is referring only to decisions that would serve Palestinian rights. This would leave the Palestinian government the right to pick and choose which resolutions it accepts and which it rejects. Hamas has insisted time and again that it rejects resolutions that would promote peace with Israel as well as Palestinian Authority agreements with Israel.
7. If the intention of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and the Fatah faction was to strengthen Mahmoud Abbas, this document does the opposite.

It distances itself from Abbas' position regarding recognition of Israel, an end to terrorism and adherence to existing Palestinian Authority Agreements with Israel, by in effect adopting the Hamas line on these issues.

It also creates the means by which Hamas would ultimately take over the PLO itself (by becoming the dominant group in the PNC) and would make any agreements and steps dependent upon the approval of the PNC or the (Hamas-dominated) Palestinian Legislative Council.

A referendum, according to the document, cannot be declared by the President but can only be legislated by the Palestinian Legislative Council.

The establishment of a "National Unity Government" as envisaged by the document would lead to only one thing - perpetuation of a Hamas dominated Government.

8. The document prevents Mahmoud Abbas from moving forward, by stating that the document is the sole basis for political action. Indeed, the text, which was announced by Hamas and Fatah is even worse than the original draft. Fatah has moved towards accepting the positions of Hamas, rather than vice versa. This is a setback for efforts to advance the movement towards peace.



**G-8 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT,
MOSCOW, 29 JUNE 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

G-8 Foreign Ministers met in Moscow on 29 June 2006 to discuss a range of global and regional issues of primary importance to the international community. The meeting focussed on Iran's nuclear programme and on the Middle East Peace Process. We exchanged views on issues of post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction, strengthening peacekeeping capacity in Africa, G8 partnership with the BMENA region, as well as discussed recent developments in Iraq, Afghanistan [...].

The Middle East

We reiterated our commitment for a negotiated, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. The G8 common goal remains the creation of a viable, democratic and sovereign Israel and Palestine living in peace and security side-by-side within internationally recognized borders.

Foreign Ministers acknowledge democratic, fair and free parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories in January 2006. We call on the Government of the Palestinian Authority to commit itself to the principles of non-violence, recognition of the right of Israel to exist, and acceptance of the previous Israeli/Palestinian agreements consistent with the Quartet statements as of January 30, May 9, and June 17, 2006.

We welcomed Prime Minister Olmert's and President Abbas' pledge to negotiations and urge both parties to avoid unilateral measures which prejudice the final status of the Palestinian territories.

We call on the Palestinian government to bring terrorist violence to an end and to take immediate measures to liberate the abducted Israeli soldier. We condemn the extremist groups responsible for these acts and all those who jeopardise the prospects for peace.

We call on Israel to exercise utmost restraint in the current crisis. The detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature raises particular concerns.

We call upon all parties to protect all civilians and not to add to their suffering. We urge them to assume their full responsibility to restore security, allowing for the resumption of the peace process and for returning to the Road Map.

Concerns were expressed over the severe humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories. We reiterated firm commitment to continue providing assistance to the Palestinian people. Foreign Ministers expressed support for the temporary international mechanism and in this regard noted the Quartet Statement of June 17, which endorsed this mechanism, and encourage other donors, including other countries, to consider early and substantial contributions.

We agreed that movement and access are key, and in this regard we call on both parties to fully implement the Movement and Access Agreement of 15 November 2005.

Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their support for the restoration of the Israeli/Palestinian political dialogue in the spirit of the Roadmap and based on the UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515.



**POPE BENEDICT XVI, STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION
IN THE HOLY LAND, VATICAN CITY, 30 JUNE 2006**

I am following events in the Holy Land with concern and I pray that all those who have been abducted may soon be returned to their loved ones.

I appeal to Israeli and Palestinian leaders that, with the generous help of the international community, they may seek responsibly for that negotiated end to the conflict, which alone can ensure the peace to which their people aspire.



EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE MIDDLE EAST, BRUSSELS, 3 JULY 2006

The European Union is extremely concerned about the situation which has evolved over the last days between Israel and the Palestinians and calls on all parties to abstain from any actions that are in violation of international law. It calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the kidnapped Israeli soldier. The European Union strongly condemns the murder of the Israeli victim of a kidnapping in the West Bank. It calls on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to violence and terrorist activities, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory.

The European Union expresses its particular concern about the detention of elected members of the Palestinian Government and legislature. Those detained should be accorded their full legal rights.

The European Union reminds all parties of their responsibility to protect civilian lives.

Notwithstanding Israel's legitimate right of self defence, ongoing military operations should be in accordance with international law. It calls on Israel to exercise the utmost restraint and to avoid disproportionate action. It regrets the destruction of essential infrastructure, which contributes to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Restoring electricity and water supplies and access for humanitarian organisations must be a priority now to avoid a humanitarian crisis.

The European Union emphasises the primacy of diplomatic means and calls upon all parties in the region to make every effort possible to resolve the current situation by peaceful means.

The European Union reaffirms its conviction that only a negotiated two-State solution can bring peace and security to the Israeli and the Palestinian people. A return to the peace process and to the implementation of the Roadmap is therefore imperative. The European Union asks that both parties meet their responsibilities and demonstrate urgently an active commitment to the search for a negotiated solution.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia⁶ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.



EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY, DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST, 4 JULY 2006

The European Union is extremely concerned about the situation, which has evolved over the last days between Israel and the Palestinians and calls on all parties to abstain from any actions that are in violation of international law. It calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the kidnapped Israeli soldier.

The European Union strongly condemns the murder of the Israeli victim of a kidnapping in the West Bank. It calls on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to violence and terrorist activities, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory.

⁶ * Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The European Union expresses its particular concern about the detention of elected members of the Palestinian Government and legislature. Those detained should be accorded their full legal rights.

The European Union reminds all parties of their responsibility to protect civilian lives. Notwithstanding Israel's legitimate right of self defence, ongoing military operations should be in accordance with international law.

It calls on Israel to exercise the utmost restraint and to avoid disproportionate action. It regrets the destruction of essential infrastructure, which contributes to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Restoring electricity and water supplies and access for humanitarian organisations must be a priority now to avoid a humanitarian crisis.

The European Union emphasises the primacy of diplomatic means and calls upon all parties in the region to make every effort possible to resolve the current situation by peaceful means.

The European Union reaffirms its conviction that only a negotiated two-State solution can bring peace and security to the Israeli and the Palestinian people. A return to the peace process and to the implementation of the Roadmap is therefore imperative.

The European Union asks that both parties meet their responsibilities and demonstrate urgently an active commitment to the search for a negotiated solution.



**EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND
EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER,
STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES,
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, STRASBOURG, 5 JULY 2006**

Mr President, Honourable Members,

We are all extremely concerned by the events unfolding in the Palestinian Territories. These are disturbing times: the insecurity, the inter-factional violence, the Kassam rockets, the shellings.

The attack by militant Palestinian factions on Karem Shalom and the abduction of an Israeli soldier, followed by the Israeli military incursion into Gaza, signal a worrying escalation. The EU, in its statement last week, strongly condemned these acts.

Last week I called on both sides to take a step back, to exercise restraint. I now repeat that call. All sides need to consider their responsibilities extremely carefully. All parties must abstain from any actions that are in violation of international law.

We must insist that the Palestinian leadership do all in its power to end violence and terrorist activities. The EU has called for the immediate and unconditional release of Corporal Gilad Shalit. This kind of act can only make things worse for the Palestinian people.

But we must also look to the Israelis to act with prudence. We understand their outrage but diplomacy offers the best chance to address the immediate priority - not the destruction of essential infrastructure, detention of members of the Palestinian Legislative Council or shelling of the Prime Minister's Office.

Recent events have considerably worsened the situation of the Palestinian population. That is both a source of sorrow and, I must admit, some frustration.

The damage to Gaza's only power station has deprived hundreds of thousands of Palestinians of electricity and could have serious humanitarian consequences. Everything must be done to prevent the humanitarian situation worsening.

Israel has to understand its responsibilities for the wellbeing of the Palestinian population. An immediate step has to be the restoration of electricity to the Palestinian territories. Both sides need to step back from the brink before this becomes a crisis that neither can control.

Honourable Members,

We must do all we can to avoid an unacceptable economic and humanitarian situation in the Palestinian Territories.

Even before the latest events we were looking at a 30% fall in income, unemployment at 40% and 67% poverty levels. But responsible politicians cannot give in to frustration. I visited Israel and the Palestinian territories two weeks ago. The principal aim of my visit was to bring Israel and President Abbas up-to-speed with European Council and Quartet decisions on the Temporary International Mechanism.

The mechanism is designed to provide immediate relief to the Palestinian people and to ensure basic services are provided. Discussions were positive.

While there is no doubt that events in Gaza and the West Bank have greatly complicated this effort, now more than ever we need to press ahead with the mechanism to help meet the basic needs of ordinary Palestinians.

A number of donors have indicated their willingness to make funds available through the mechanism. But the needs will be great, and funds are limited. The Commission has therefore sought the budgetary authority's approval to transfer funds from the Emergency Reserve.

I am grateful for the support of the European Parliament in this difficult endeavour and I am especially grateful for the very valuable exchanges of views I have had with the relevant committee chairs and leaders, and my discussions with AFET, when setting up the Mechanism. It is our collective responsibility as Europeans to help the Palestinians and to give peace a chance. I look forward to your continued support.

Honourable Members,

Let's be clear: the mechanism cannot be a panacea for all the difficulties in the Palestinian territories. Donors cannot substitute for the responsibilities of the Palestinian government, which must take real steps to meet the Quartet principles and end the violence that threatens the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Nor can donors substitute for the responsibilities of Israel under international law, for freeing up movement and access, for releasing Palestinian customs and tax revenues or for the recent damage caused to key civil infrastructure.

Honourable Members,

The events of the recent days have undermined a fragile process that had just begun with the meeting of President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert in Amman.

These events also come at a time when progress was being made on a national consensus agreement between Hamas and Fatah based on the prisoners' initiative. It remains to be seen whether this tentative agreement for a government of national unity will produce a leadership better able to meet its responsibilities. I have commended President Abbas for taking this initiative.

But, at the same time, I have been clear that this is not an end in itself, but only the start of a process. The Palestinian Government must, ultimately, commit itself to renouncing violence, recognising Israel and respecting previous agreements as set out by the Quartet.

We are faced with a grave situation in the Middle East. We have to work together to de-escalate the tension and to give diplomacy a chance. Because in all the chaos and confusion of the current situation, one thing is clear: a negotiated two-state solution is the only way to guarantee the security that ordinary people – Israelis, Palestinians and others - desire.

Concluding remarks

Mr President, Honourable Members,

I sense and share your deep concern at the escalation of events in the Gaza Strip. I also understand the reactions in Israel to the kidnapping of Corporal Shalit: he must be released unharmed. And the Kassam rocket attacks from northern Gaza into Israel must stop. But the Israeli military incursion into the Gaza Strip and the destruction of civilian infrastructure there punishes Palestinians collectively and puts civilian lives at risk. It raises questions about the respect of international law.

Is it in Israel's long-term interest? Doesn't it threaten to reinforce the vicious circle of poverty and extremism? The restoration of electricity and water supplies must now take place quickly, and with Israeli assistance.

The arrest of elected lawmakers threatens the institutions of the Palestinian Authority that will be necessary for the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state. The EU has expressed particular concerns about the detention of these elected members of the Palestinian Government and legislature. Those detained must be accorded their full legal rights.

All sides must exercise restraint.

Mr President, Honourable Members,

I spoke last year of the need for hope, for perspective, in the Peace Process, in the wake of Israel's disengagement from Gaza and the G8 plan to revive the Palestinian economy. How different the situation looks today. Yet it is possible to step back.

We remain committed to a negotiated two-state solution, and will not recognise any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed to by both sides.

We welcome President Abbas' efforts to create the widest possible Palestinian consensus in support of the objectives of the roadmap.

We are ready to work with any Palestinian government that renounces violence, recognises Israel and respects previous agreements, as set out by the Quartet.

We have reiterated our commitment for a negotiated, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. The G8 common goal remains the creation of a viable, democratic and sovereign Israel and Palestine living in peace and security, side-by-side within internationally recognised borders.

And we stand by the Palestinian people, as our efforts to help meet their basic needs testify. - Thank you.



**UN COUNCIL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, RESOLUTION S-1/RES. 1 ON THE
HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY,
SPECIAL SESSION, NEW YORK, 6 JULY 2006**

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights,

Affirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civil Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to other occupied Arab territories, Expressing deep concern at the breaches by Israel, the occupying Power, of international humanitarian law and human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the arbitrary arrest of Palestinian ministers, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and other officials, as well as the arbitrary arrest of other civilians, the military attacks against Pales-

tinian ministries, including the office of the Premier, and the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure, including water networks, power plants and bridges,

1. *Expresses* grave concern at the violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people caused by the Israeli occupation, including the current extensive Israeli military operations against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, end its military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, abide scrupulously by the provisions of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and refrain from imposing collective punishment on Palestinian civilians;
3. *Expresses* grave concern at the detrimental impact of the current Israeli military operation on the already deteriorating humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people;
4. *Urges* Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately release the arrested Palestinian ministers, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and other officials, as well as all other arrested Palestinian civilians;
5. *Urges* all concerned parties to respect the rules of international humanitarian law, to refrain from violence against the civilian population and to treat under all circumstances all detained combatants and civilians in accordance with the Geneva Conventions;
6. *Decides* to dispatch an urgent fact-finding mission headed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967;
7. *Calls for* a negotiated solution to the current crisis.

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 29:11 with 5 abstentions]



US NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD, STATEMENT CONDEMNING ISRAEL'S CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, WASHINGTON, DC, 6 JULY 2006

The National Lawyers Guild calls upon the international community to join us in our strong condemnation and call for sanctions against Israel for its on-going occupation and crimes against humanity meted-out against the Palestinians. Israel has recently intensified its relentless saturation bombing against the Palestinian civilian population. On June 27, 2006, Israeli F-16's directly targeted Palestinian civilians by bombing and destroying three vital bridges, ministerial buildings, universities, scarce water supplies, and electricity stations. As a direct consequence, over two-thirds of the Palestinian population in Gaza have been and continue to be denied access to water and electricity.

Magnifying the deadly impact of Israel's actions is the fact that well before Israel's recent military incursion, Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank were already facing a lethal humanitarian crisis stemming from extensive shortages of food, medicine, clean drinking water, and lack of access to public utilities - Israel's admitted "starvation diet" campaign.

A single snapshot of Israel's ruthless bombardment reveals Palestinians trapped in Gaza - the most densely populated region on Earth - suffered through one of the most ferocious days of bombing, on June 29, 2006, when Israel's Occupation Forces (IOF) launched over 400 artillery shells throughout the northern and southern Gaza Strip. Further intensifying Israel's willful and ever-increasing violations of international law, Israel has drastically increased its kidnapping of Palestinian leaders, "arresting" more than 64 elected Palestinian Legislative Council members, city mayors, cabinet ministers, and lawmakers.

Currently, the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian disaster faced by Palestinians continues uninterrupted while Israeli tanks and armed forces have now returned to Gaza under the cover of sustained bombing raids by Israeli F-16 jets and relentless shelling by Israeli artillery.

Accordingly, the National Lawyers Guild:

- 1) Demands Israel immediately cease all military attacks and lift the economic embargo imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- 2) Demands Israel immediately and unconditionally releases the recently kidnapped Palestinian parliamentary officials as well as all Palestinian Arab political prisoners and detainees.
- 3) Urges the international community to pressure Israel, the United States, and Europe to lift the deadly economic embargo unjustly imposed against the Palestinian people following the democratic election of a new Palestinian Legislative Council.
- 4) Strongly condemns Israel's use of brutal psychological warfare on the over 1.4 million Palestinians living in the Israeli occupied Gaza Strip to weaken and destroy the democratically elected Palestinian Legislative Council.
- 5) Strongly condemns Israel's actions designed to achieve its threat that it "will not allow the Palestinian government to survive."
- 6) Calls upon the international community to join in our strong condemnation of Israel's belligerent crimes against humanity and gross violations of international law, including Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibiting collective punishment and Article 48 forbidding military actions against civilian populations and infrastructure.
- 7) Emphasizes the international community must continue to insist Israel immediately implement other international laws including U.N. Resolution 194.
- 8) Stresses while condemnation of Israel's most recent crimes against humanity is critical, the international community must weave together, and not isolate, the snapshots of Israel's gross violations of international law.
- 9) Further stresses the full-picture revealed by weaving together Israel's unbroken pattern of crimes against humanity plainly uncovers the following reality: for nearly six decades Israel has been engaged in well-planned, systematic, and continuous campaign intended to destroy the Palestinian people, culture, civil society and the infrastructure of life itself (see In the Name of Security: Israel and the Destruction of Palestinian Culture & Civil Society, Preliminary Report of The National Lawyers Guild's Emergency Delegation to the West Bank May 16-24, 2002).
- 10) Calls upon the international community to expose the myth that Israel has "disengaged" from Gaza despite Israel's continued control of Gaza's airspace, sea space, land borders, public services (including water, sewage, electricity, and telecommunication networks).
- 11) Calls upon the international community to send immediate aid to Palestinians, including food, water, and medicine.
- 12) Urges the international community to step-up its efforts to boycott, sanction, and divest from Israel.



**JERUSALEM CHURCH LEADERS, JOINT STATEMENT
ON THE CRISIS IN GAZA, JERUSALEM, 7 JULY 2006**

"Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands at a distance; for truth stumbles in the public square, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking, and whoever turns from evil is despoiled. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, and was appalled that there was no one to intervene." (Isaiah 59: 14-16)

The Israeli violence and aggression of this present moment is without proportion or justification.

An Israeli soldier was taken prisoner in combat. A Jewish settler was kidnapped and killed. As a response, Israeli forces destroy three bridges and a power station, causing millions of dollars in damage and leaving up to 750 000 people without electricity or water in Gaza. Moreover, Israeli forces abducted 84 people, among them seven Cabinet Ministers and 21 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. This comes after a week in which 48 Palestinians were killed, including 27 innocent civilians. The horrific statistic includes nine children and a pregnant woman.

Today, we Christian heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, say: "Events in our land are against law and reason. It is our duty as religious leaders to keep saying this to the authorities. It is against law and

reason that you remain on and you keep us on the ways of death. "The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, and was appalled that there was no one to intervene. (Isaiah 59: 16)

We condemn the abduction of the Israeli soldier, the killing of the settler youth, as we condemn the daily abduction and killing of dozens of Palestinians as well as the incarceration of thousands of them in prisons. All human beings, Israelis and Palestinians, have the same dignity and must be treated equally. All violence and aggression against human dignity, whether Israeli or Palestinian must stop.

Our suffering, both Israeli and Palestinian, will end when the truth on both sides is recognized. The right of Israel to have security must be recognized. At the same time, there must be recognition that the core of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians arises from the deprivation of freedom to the Palestinian people. We firmly support the fight against terrorism, but we remind equally firmly that this fight begins by eradicating the root cause of all violence, which is the deprivation of the freedom of the Palestinian people.

It is against law and reason to keep following the way of death. The moral imperative is clear. Stop all the violence. Stop the killing. Protect the life and dignity of people. Begin negotiations. Break this murderous chain of violence in which we are all ensnared. And listen to God's call, "Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it." (Psalm 33:15)

Things have gone too far. We call on the international community to intervene and insist on a diplomatic solution to this conflict. All authorities must change course, and with unflinching international pressure and presence, must be negotiations in to reach a just and definitive peace. "What does the Lord require of you... To do Justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

- + Patriarch Theophilos III: Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
- + Patriarch Michel Sabbah: Latin Patriarchate
- + Patriarch Torkom II: Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate
- + Pier Battista Pizziballa, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land
- + Anba Abraham: Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
- + Swerios Malki Mourad: Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate
- + Abune Grima: Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate
- + Paul Nabil Sayyah: Maronite Patriarchal Exarchate
- + Bishop Riah Abu Al-Assal: Episcopal Church of Jerusalem & the Middle East
- + Bishop Mounib Younan: Lutheran Evangelical Church
- + Pierre Malki: Exarch for the Syrian Catholics - Jerusalem
- + George Bakar: Greek Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate
- + Rev Rafael Minassian: Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate



BRITISH NOTABLES, STATEMENT CALLING FOR AN END TO THE PUNISHMENT OF THE PALESTINIANS, LONDON, 12 JULY 2006

The Israeli government's behaviour at present is to be condemned (Report, July 8). The failure of our government to speak out against Israel's oppression of the Palestinian population is complicit with those actions of the EU, the US and Israel. It is, in effect, a coordinated attempt to collectively punish the Palestinian people for electing a government of which they disapprove. Having lectured the people of the Middle East about democracy for decades, Europe and the US are seeking to trample upon the democratic rights of the Palestinian people.

The suspension of aid by the EU and the US, the withholding of Palestinian taxes by Israel, and Israel's illegal blockade are crimes against the Palestinian people. They are creating a humanitarian catastrophe

in Gaza and the West Bank and have emboldened Israel to sustain an unrelenting bomb and missile barrage, which regularly kills innocent children and other noncombatants in violation of the fourth Geneva convention which protects civilians under occupation. Israel has bombed the only power station in Gaza, destroying electricity and water supplies to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and forcing tens of thousands to flee from their homes. These are crimes against humanity.

Israel has now kidnapped a quarter of the parliament elected by the Palestinians, and half of its democratically elected government. They join thousands of other Palestinians illegally kidnapped or imprisoned, including over 300 children. We call upon the British government: 1) To immediately work for the restoration of EU aid to the Palestinian Authority; 2) to demand that Israel ends its blockade and pass on taxes; 3) to demand that Israel cease all military action in the occupied territories; 4) to demand the release of all elected Palestinian officials and the instigation of a programme for the release of all prisoners held in violation of international law; 5) to apply pressure through the UN for Israel to respect the UN resolutions requiring its withdrawal from the territories it illegally occupied in 1967; 6) to end Britain's arms trade with Israel until it abides by international law.

Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London; John Pilger, Betty Hunter, Palestine Solidarity Campaign; Lord Ian Gilmour; Prof Moshe Machover; Prof Avi Shlaim; Daniel Machover; Juliet Stevenson; Bella Freud; Ahdaf Soueif; Peter Kilfoyle MP; Clare Short MP; Derek Wyatt MP; Helen Goodman MP; Jeremy Corbyn MP; Paul Flynn MP; Frank Cook MP; John Austin MP; Hywel Williams MP; Linda Riordan MP; Peter Soulsby MP; Harry Cohen MP; Mike Hancock MP; Mike Wood MP; Karma Nabulsi; Keith Sonnet; UNISON Deputy General Secretary; Rev. Cannon Garth Hewitt; Rev. Stephen Sizer; Majed Al Zeer; Andrew De La Tour; Tony Benn; Victoria Brittain; Andy Bain, President TSSA; Baljeet Ghale, NUT Senior Vice-President; Baroness Jenny Tonge; Bruce Kent; Caryl Churchill; Charles Asprey; Corin Redgrave; Dr. Ghada Karmi; Gargi Bhattacharyya, Vice-President University and College Union (personal capacity); Prof Anthony Zahlan; Prof Hilary Rose; Prof Steven Rose Ruqayyah Collector, NUS National Black Students Officer; Sacha Craddock; Steve Kemp, NUM General Secretary; Susan Wooldridge



UN SECURITY COUNCIL, DRAFT RESOLUTION S/2006/508, NEW YORK, 13 JULY 2006

[The draft resolution – calling on Israel to halt its military offensive in the Gaza Strip – was sponsored by Qatar and vetoed by the US, while 10 voted in favor and 4 abstained.]

The Security Council,

Reaffirming all its relevant resolutions, in particular, 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515(2003),

Reaffirming the applicable rules and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law and all relevant human rights laws, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949,

Expressing its grave concern at the continued deterioration of the situation on the ground in the Palestinian Territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem, during recent weeks,

Condemning military assault being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Gaza Strip, which has caused the killing and injury of dozens of Palestinian civilians, and the destruction of Palestinian property and civilian infrastructure, notably Gaza's main power station, and condemning also the detention of democratically elected Palestinian and other officials,

Condemning also the firing of rockets from Gaza into Israel and the abduction of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza, and the recent abduction and killing of an Israeli civilian in the West Bank,

Condemning all acts of violence, terror and destruction,

1. Calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldier;
2. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained Palestinian ministers, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and other officials, as well as other illegally detained Palestinian civilians;

3. Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to halt its military operations and its disproportionate use of force that endanger the Palestinian civilian population and to withdraw its forces to their original positions outside the Gaza Strip;
4. Emphasizes the need to preserve the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority and Palestinian infrastructure and properties;
5. Calls upon the Palestinian Authority to take immediate and sustained action to bring an end to violence, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory;
6. Urges all concerned parties to abide by their obligations and respect in all circumstances the rules of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and refrain from violence against civilian population;
7. Calls on the international community to provide emergency assistance to the Palestinian people to meet the dire humanitarian situation; and also calls on the Government of Israel to restore and maintain the continuous and uninterrupted supply of fuel to Gaza, and to act expeditiously to replace the destroyed equipment at the Gaza power plant;
8. Calls on both parties, supported by the international community, including the Quartet, to take immediate steps to create the necessary condition for the resumption of negotiation and restarting the peace process;
9. Stresses the importance of, and the need to achieve, a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions including its resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the Madrid terms of reference, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the League of Arab States Summit in March 2002 in Beirut and the Road Map.
10. Requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to report back to the Security Council on the implementation of this resolution in a timely manner;
11. Decides to remain seized of the matter.



**POPE BENEDICT XVI, STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION
IN THE HOLY LAND, 16 JULY 2006**

In recent days the news from the Holy Land is a reason for new and grave concern for all, in particular because of the spread of warlike actions also in Lebanon, and because of the numerous victims among the civilian population. At the origin of these cruel oppositions there are, sadly, objective situations of violation of law and justice. But neither terrorist acts nor reprisals, especially when they entail tragic consequences for the civilian population, can be justified. By such paths, as bitter experiences shows, positive results are not achieved.

This day is dedicated to the Virgin of Carmel, Mount of the Holy Land that, a few kilometers from Lebanon, dominates the Israeli city of Haifa, the latter also recently hit. Let us pray to Mary, Queen of Peace, to implore from God the fundamental gift of concord, bringing political leaders back to the path of reason, and opening new possibilities of dialogue and agreement. In this perspective I invite the local Churches to raise special prayers for peace in the Holy Land and in the whole of the Middle East.



**G-8 SUMMIT MEETING, STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST,
ST. PETERSBURG, 16 JULY 2006**

Today, we the G-8 Leaders express our deepening concern about the situation in the Middle East, in particular the rising civilian casualties on all sides and the damage to infrastructure. We are united in our determination to pursue efforts to restore peace. We offer our full support for the UN Secretary General's mission presently in the region.

The root cause of the problems in the region is the absence of a comprehensive Middle East peace.

The immediate crisis results from efforts by extremist forces to destabilize the region and to frustrate the aspirations of the Palestinian, Israeli and Lebanese people for democracy and peace. In Gaza, elements of Hamas launched rocket attacks against Israeli territory and abducted an Israeli soldier. In Lebanon, Hizbollah, in violation of the Blue Line, attacked Israel from Lebanese territory and killed and captured Israeli soldiers, reversing the positive trends that began with the Syrian withdrawal in 2005, and undermining the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Fuad Siniora.

These extremist elements and those that support them cannot be allowed to plunge the Middle East into chaos and provoke a wider conflict. The extremists must immediately halt their attacks.

It is also critical that Israel, while exercising the right to defend itself, be mindful of the strategic and humanitarian consequences of its actions. We call upon Israel to exercise utmost restraint, seeking to avoid casualties among innocent civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure and to refrain from acts that would destabilize the Lebanese government.

The most urgent priority is to create conditions for a cessation of violence that will be sustainable and lay the foundation for a more permanent solution. This, in our judgment, requires:

- The return of the Israeli soldiers in Gaza and Lebanon unharmed;
- An end to the shelling of Israeli territory;
- An end to Israeli military operations and the early withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza;
- The release of the arrested Palestinian ministers and parliamentarians.

The framework for resolving these disputes is already established by international consensus.

In *Lebanon*, UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1680 address the underlying conditions that gave rise to this crisis. We urge the UN Security Council to develop a plan for the full implementation of these resolutions.

We extend to the Government of Lebanon our full support in asserting its sovereign authority over all its territory in fulfillment of UNSCR 1559. This includes the deployment of Lebanese Armed Forces to all parts of the country, in particular the South, and the disarming of militias. We would welcome an examination by the UN Security Council of the possibility of an international security/monitoring presence.

We also support the initiation of a political dialogue between Lebanese and Israeli officials on all issues of concern to both parties. In addition, we will support the economic and humanitarian needs of the Lebanese people, including the convening at the right time of a donors conference.

In *Gaza*, the disengagement of Israel provided an opportunity to move a further step toward a two state solution under the Road Map. All Palestinian parties should accept the existence of Israel, reject violence, and accept all previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. For its part, Israel needs to refrain from unilateral acts that could prejudice a final settlement and agree to negotiate in good faith.

Our goal is an immediate end to the current violence, a resumption of security cooperation and of a political engagement both among Palestinians and with Israel. This requires:

- An end to terrorist attacks against Israel;
- A resumption of the efforts of President Abbas to ensure that the Palestinian government complies with the Quartet principles;
- Immediate expansion of the temporary international mechanism for donors established under the direction of the Quartet;
- Israeli compliance with the Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005 and action on other steps to ease the humanitarian plight of the people of Gaza and the West Bank;

- Resumption of security cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis;
- Action to ensure that the Palestinian security forces comply with Palestinian law and with the Roadmap, so that they are unified and effective in providing security for the Palestinian people;
- Resumption of dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli political officials.

These proposals are our contribution to the international effort underway to restore calm to the Middle East and provide a basis for progress towards a sustainable peace, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. The Quartet will continue to play a central role. The G-8 welcomes the positive efforts of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan as well as other responsible regional actors to return the region to peace. We look forward to the report of the Secretary General's mission to the Security Council later this week which we believe could provide a framework for achieving our common objectives.



EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS, DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, BRUSSELS, 17 JULY 2006

The European Union remains committed to working within the Quartet towards the goal of a just, viable and lasting solution based on existing agreements, the relevant UNSC resolutions and the principles laid down in the Roadmap.

In view of the urgent need to re-launch the process towards a negotiated two-state solution which would bring peace to both the Israeli and the Palestinian people, the European Council calls for an early engagement between the Israeli Prime Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority, who was elected on a platform of peace. It reiterates its expectations from both parties to respect existing agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap.

As set out by the Quartet, the Hamas-led Palestinian Government needs to meet and implement the three principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements and obligations.

The European Council remains concerned by the security situation in Gaza and the West Bank. It condemns the violence against Palestinian civilians. It condemns the launching of Qassem rockets against population centres in Israel. It reminds both parties of their responsibility to protect civilian lives. It calls on the Palestinian Authority to take action to improve security and prevent terrorist attacks on Israel. It reiterates its condemnation of extra-judicial killings. It calls on all parties to refrain from violence and to exercise restraint.

The European Council calls on all Palestinian political forces to engage in a national dialogue aimed primarily at putting an end to inter-Palestinian confrontation and establishing law and order.

It calls on the Palestinian government to cooperate with the President of the Palestinian Authority to achieve this, including through the disarmament of groups engaged in violence and terror.

The European Council takes note of the announcement by President Abbas to hold a referendum. It calls on all Palestinian political forces to work towards the widest possible consensus in support of the objectives of the Roadmap.

The European Council calls on Israel to desist from any action that threatens the viability of an agreed two-State solution and from acts that are contrary to international law. Of particular concern are settlement activities, the construction of the barrier on Palestinian land and activities in and around East Jerusalem as well as in the Jordan Valley. The European Union will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed to by both sides.

The European Council urges Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues which are essential in averting a crisis in the Palestinian territories.

The European Council stresses the need for a coordinated international response to the deterioration of the humanitarian, economic and financial situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The European Council endorses the proposed temporary international mechanism to channel assistance directly to the Palestinian people, which has been drawn up by the Commission following consultations within the EU as well as with Quartet members, major donors, international financial institutions and partners in the region. The European Council appreciates the Commission's work so far and requests it to continue urgently establishing the mechanism, in conjunction with Quartet members, other key international partners and the PA President's Office.

The European Council agrees that, in order to achieve an immediate impact, the mechanism will focus on essential supplies and running costs for social services and health, supply of utilities including fuel, and social allowances. Other donors, including Arab States, are invited to provide funding and to consider early and substantial contributions. The Community stands ready to contribute a substantial amount to the international mechanism.

The European Council furthermore underlines the importance of freedom of movement and urges both parties to take concrete steps to implement their obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access, in order to alleviate the worsening situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The European Council reiterates the importance of preserving and pursuing the democratic functioning of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority whose continuity is crucial for a future independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State based on the rule of law.



**PALESTINIAN NGO NETWORK (PNGO), STATEMENT CONDEMNING
ISRAEL'S WAR CRIMES IN GAZA AND LEBANON, RAMALLAH, 17 JULY 2006**

Representatives of several parties, political groups and Palestinian civil society organizations convened in the city of Ramallah upon the invitation of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO). The meeting discussed current conditions in light of the blatant Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, the atrocities that are being committed by Israeli troops against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, and the serious escalation in the region in general following Israeli aggression on Lebanon.

Participants stressed that the goals of the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip and in Lebanon are evidently much broader than a mere reaction to the capture of Israeli soldiers during military operations by the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance.

On the Palestinian front, the Israeli military operation comes in the context of a comprehensive integrated policy to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian society. It is another attempt to weaken the Palestinian entity and sabotage any hope for development. The Israeli invasion came specifically at a time of Palestinian political conciliation, as reflected in the signing of the National Conciliation Document, which translated the Palestinian consensus into concrete terms. The current atrocities committed by the Israeli military during this invasion demonstrate yet again how far Israeli disregard for Palestinian human life can reach. More than 90 people have been killed and hundreds (mostly women and children) have been injured. In addition, there has been an all-out destruction of vital Palestinian infrastructure, including the main power plant, which has brought Gaza to the verge of humanitarian disaster in terms of shortages in basic food items and medical supplies.

On the Lebanese front, the barbaric Israeli aggression shows the complete picture, since the goals of that aggression are embedded in the conditions and dictates that the Israeli government wants to impose on the region so that it succumbs to Israeli-American hegemony. All international attempts to secure an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon failed as a result of resolute objections by the US, which only days ago vetoed a UNSC resolution aimed at ending Israel's attack on Gaza. Simultaneously, the Israeli government's intransigent position against engaging in any negotiations over the fate of its captured soldiers has made conditions worse, despite attempts by several parties to reach a negotiable solution.

In light of all these developments, the question is raised whether the political frame that has been endorsed in Oslo and at a later stage through the road map by the quartet is still valid as the peace process has been rendered obsolete by the war crimes committed by Israel, through actions of indiscriminate killings, massive destruction of infrastructure, and inflicting humanitarian disaster on the civilian population at large. This is especially true in view of a weakened Palestinian Authority that does not have significant control on the ground, and at the time when the Israeli government has illegally arrested a large number of the democratically-elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and of the Palestinian government.

Within this context, the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, requires the call for the provision of immediate international protection for the Palestinian people.

The decision of the G8 regarding Israeli aggression in Lebanon and Palestine proves again the clear bias of these countries towards Israel and their unconditional acceptance of Israel's narrative. This demonstrates, again, the need for a political frame that is based on international legitimacy and the United Nations resolutions and within the frame of the United Nations charter.

A just solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict must guarantee the interests of all peoples in the region and must be based on international legitimacy, through which the conflict can be resolved and stabilised. In this respect, an immediate ceasefire is needed, and a halt of aggression in Lebanon and Palestine should be applied. Diplomatic efforts must be given an opportunity to find ways of addressing the real causes of the problem, in order to end the current crisis. The participants in the meeting stressed the need for Palestinian political forces and civil society organizations to formulate a common program that would include the following principles:

1. Ensuring the implementation of the clauses stated in the National Conciliation Document on the need to revitalize the PLO so that it can develop and lead the implementation of a common, agreed-upon resistance strategy against the Israeli occupation.
2. Confronting Israeli aggression and reinforce the spirit of resistance and steadfastness among the Palestinian people in confronting the Israeli occupation and rejecting all unilateral Israeli dictates.
3. Requesting that our partners in Arab civil society organizations increase their effective solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and exert pressure on their respective governments to stop dealing with the state of Israel at all levels.
4. Mobilising solidarity campaigns at the international level and demanding a full boycott, divestment and the imposition of sanctions against Israel, until it fully complies with its obligations under international law by ending its occupation, oppression and racial discrimination.
5. Taking the necessary measures at the Palestinian level to stop all normalization with Israel, particularly any projects between Palestinian and Israeli organizations, unless they are based on a common political stance of rejecting the occupation and recognizing international legitimacy, including the international resolutions pertaining to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.
6. Coordinating the efforts of Palestinian organizations that focus on Israeli violations of international law, with the objective of advocating a boycott against Israel.
7. Calling on the High Contracting Parties of the Fourth Geneva Convention to hold an urgent meeting to discuss practical means of enforcing the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory.
8. Declaring next Friday, 21 July 2006, a day of solidarity with the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and to confront Israel's aggression by calling on all civil society organizations in the Arab countries to organize massive marches on that day.
9. Demanding that the PLC drafts a special law on boycotting Israel and approaches international parliaments to push towards imposing sanctions on Israel, due to its flagrant and persistent violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

Civil Society organizations, Occupied Palestinian Territory



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST,
2744TH GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS MEETING,
BRUSSELS, 17-18 JULY 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

The Council is acutely concerned at the situation in the Middle East, in particular at the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and deplores the loss of civilian lives on all sides. These developments pose a serious threat to peace and security in the region. It calls for the release of abducted soldiers and an immediate cessation of hostilities. The EU recognises Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, but it urges Israel to exercise utmost restraint and not to resort to disproportionate action. All parties must do everything possible to protect civilian populations and to refrain from actions in violation of international humanitarian law. It is urgent to stop violence and return to diplomacy. Only a political process of negotiation can bring lasting peace to the region. It is urgent that the international community engage actively in this. We express our full support for the High Representative's active engagement, for the efforts of the UN Secretary General and for the efforts of actors in the region. The Council welcomes an active role of the UN Security Council including through examining the possibility for an international monitoring presence. We support the agenda set out in the G8 statement.

Developments in Lebanon and Israel

1. The European Union condemns the attacks by Hezbollah on Israel and the abduction of two Israeli soldiers. It calls for their immediate and unconditional release and for the cessation of all attacks on Israeli towns and cities.
2. The EU recalls the need for the Lebanese state to restore its sovereignty over the whole of its national territory and to do its utmost to prevent such attacks. The EU expresses its support for Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora. The EU urges the full implementation of the UNSCR 1559 and UNSCR 1680, including disbanding and disarming of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, and strict respect of the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon.
3. Continued escalation will only aggravate the vicious circle of violence and retribution.
4. The EU appeals to all parties to ensure the safe and speedy passage from Lebanon of all those citizens of EU Member States, as well as other expatriates, who wish to leave Lebanon in the current situation. The EU calls on Israel not to hinder shipping in international waters.

Situation in Gaza

5. The Council remains deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation between Israel and the Palestinians and deplores the loss of civilian life it has brought. The EU reiterates its call for the immediate and unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldier. It calls on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to violence and terrorist activities, including the firing of rockets on Israeli territory.
6. The Council calls on both parties to alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation of the civilian population. The Council urges Israel to engage in the restoration of the destroyed civilian infrastructure. The Israeli air strikes on Gaza's only power plant have had a far-reaching impact on Gaza's hospitals, food production facilities, water and sanitation systems. The Council urges that the border crossings such as Rafah and Karni be opened and remain open to allow at least the passage of humanitarian aid and basic products to Gaza and the safe return of Palestinians currently on the Egyptian side of the border.
7. The European Union remains particularly concerned about the detention of elected members of the Palestinian Government and legislature and calls for their immediate release.
8. The Council commends the efforts of President Abbas to create the widest possible consensus in support of the objectives of the Roadmap. The Council reiterates that the EU stands ready to work with a Palestinian government that meets and implements the three principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of existing agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. The Council encourages progress in the Palestinian National Dialogue to that end.
9. The European Union is committed to pressing ahead with the further expansion of the proposed Temporary International Mechanism to which the EU and its Member States have contributed sig-

nificantly. The EU encourages donors and others in the region to make full use of the mechanism. The Council urges Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues.

10. This crisis underlines the need for the negotiation of a just and lasting settlement. The European Union calls on both parties to demonstrate urgently an active commitment to the search for a negotiated two-state solution. The European Union supports the central role of the Quartet in this process.



**VATICAN, COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE WORSENING SITUATION IN THE
MIDDLE EAST, PRESS OFFICE, VATICAN CITY, 20 JULY 2006**

The Holy Father is following with great concern the destinies of all the peoples involved and has proclaimed this Sunday, July 23, as a special day of prayer and penance, inviting the pastors and faithful of all the particular Churches, and all believers of the world, to implore from God the precious gift of peace.

In particular, the Supreme Pontiff hopes that prayers will be raised to the Lord for an immediate cease-fire between the sides, for humanitarian corridors to be opened in order to bring help to the suffering peoples, and for reasonable and responsible negotiations to begin to put an end to objective situations of injustice that exist in that region, as already indicated by Pope Benedict XVI at the Angelus last Sunday, July 16.

In reality, the Lebanese have the right to see the integrity and sovereignty of their country respected, the Israelis, the right to live in peace in their state, and the Palestinians have the right to have their own free and sovereign homeland.

At this sorrowful moment, His Holiness also makes an appeal to charitable organizations to help all the people struck by this pitiless conflict.



**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, GENERAL SECRETARY, PASTORAL
LETTER ON THE VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 21 JULY 2006**

Dear Member Churches in the Middle East, Europe and North America,

Greetings to you as sisters and brothers in Christ and fellow disciples of the Prince of Peace.

In recent days we have all been stirred with compassion and beset with sadness at the shedding of innocent blood in the Middle East. The people of Lebanon are suffering violence whose scale defies comprehension; citizens of Israel fear death from the sky; Palestinians and Iraqis mourn new losses day after day. No end to the suffering is in sight. The earth shakes in Galilee, and nations seem to crumble before our eyes. Ancient cries of anguish echo in our ears: *Even when I cry out, "Violence!" I am not answered. I call aloud, but there is no justice. (Job 19:7) At such a time we must turn to God with our laments, seek comfort from each other and offer signs of hope to neighbours in distress.*

Many of us feel a mixture of fresh alarm and old frustration that so much is so dangerously wrong in the Middle East. World leaders are troubled, too. They met while bombs and rockets flew, yet returned home without uniting for peace. The world watched with tired hope but saw no bold actions to save lives.

The international community's capacity in such a crisis grows if it finds unity around what needs to be done. Alternatives to the violence in Lebanon, Israel and Gaza are well within its grasp, including cease-fires that end the spiral of violence, pressure to stop attacks on innocent civilians and protection

for civilians according to international humanitarian law, support for negotiations on equitable terms and the deployment of a multinational force capable of keeping peace.

However, instead of policies anchored in law, certain states seem bent on applying new and dangerous remedies to well-known problems in the region. Their leaders excuse uses of force that go well beyond the constraints of international law. They brand enemies as ‘terrorists’, bypass laws, courts, and juries, and mete out punishment at will even including assassinations from the air. Militant groups adopt similar tactics, fuelling conflicts and spreading contempt for human lives. In Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank and Israel as well as Iraq, no amount of fear and anger can justify retaliatory targeting of homes, bombing of communities and destruction of a nation’s infrastructure. There, as in Afghanistan, deaths, injuries and damages inflicted through retaliation have far, far outnumbered the casualties and damage caused by the initial attacks. Acts of terror do not give license to wreak terror in return.

"Acts of terror are criminal acts and should be addressed by the use of instruments of the rule of law," the WCC Assembly said in February of this year. "Measures to counter terrorism must be demilitarized and the concept of the ‘war on terror’ must be firmly challenged by the churches." The militarization of the ‘war on terror’ has put civilians at greatest risk. State and public security is not found in violence but in justice, in governance and development that serves marginalized groups, and in respect for human rights and the dignity that God has given all people.

As churches we are inheritors of resolute hope. Our tradition is to support those who suffer, to assist those in need, and to advocate for those denied justice. Let us then raise our laments to God and bring the requirements of peace to those who have ears to hear:

First, let us join in lamenting the loss of life and destruction of homes and livelihoods; praying for healing of those who suffer and for justice to constrain those who would destroy; and praying for the safety and well-being of all communities in the Middle East - Muslim, Christian, and Jewish.

Second, let us help. 500,000 people have already been uprooted by the attacks on Lebanon, the UN reports. Gaza lives under collective punishment, incursions and siege. Dwellings and workplaces in Israel have been destroyed. Churches and related agencies are serving some of these needs. They need our support, and Action by Churches Together is coordinating appeals for aid.

Third, we must speak out. Churches of the Middle East consistently ask sister churches around the world to speak out on their behalf to parishes, the public, their governments and to the embassies of governments most directly involved in the Middle East - the United States, Israel, the European Union and Russia. We commend such action to you and ask the churches to use policies that you have set through the WCC and similar policy-making bodies. Calls to bring to public attention include:

- immediate cease-fires; protection of civilians as prescribed by law including the Geneva Conventions;
- release of all those in detention, or trial under due process of law and according to international norms;
- multilateral implementation of long-delayed UN Security Council resolutions for peace in Lebanon, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including an urgent end to the illegal 39-year occupation that is the vortex of the region’s violent storms.

The World Council of Churches has always held that justice among the states and peoples of the Middle East must be based on the international rule of law and on rigorous implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions pertaining to the conflicts. May we continue to stand together, praying for peace with justice to embrace all concerned. As we pray, so may we believe. And so, too, be moved to action.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia
General Secretary



**US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, RADIO ADDRESS TO THE NATION,
WASHINGTON, DC, 22 JULY 2006**

[In his address, Bush pledged to continue working toward resolution of the Israel-Lebanon crisis and a return to the road map that includes "establishing a viable democratic Palestinian state."]

Good morning. This week I returned from Russia, where I met with world leaders at the G8 summit. The summit was an opportunity for important talks with these nations, and it brought progress on key issues. We had wide-ranging discussions on the global economy. We agreed on new steps to strengthen our collective security, including a United Nations Security Council resolution on North Korea. This resolution condemned North Korea's recent missile launches and it urged the North Korean regime to abandon its nuclear programs and return to the six-party talks.

Much of our time at the summit was spent discussing the situation in the Middle East, especially the recent violence in Israel and Lebanon. The recent crisis in the region was triggered by the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by the terrorist group Hizballah and the launch of rockets against Israeli cities. I believe sovereign nations have the right to defend their people from terrorist attack, and to take the necessary action to prevent those attacks.

We're also mindful of the cost to innocent civilians in Lebanon and in Israel, and we have called on Israel to continue to exercise the greatest possible care to protect innocent lives. Throughout this crisis I have spoken to leaders in the Middle East and around the world. Our efforts to resolve this dangerous situation are guided by an international framework that is already in place.

In 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1559, which recognizes the sovereignty of Lebanon, calls for all foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon, and calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all militias. Hizballah defied the world's just demands by maintaining armed units in the southern region of Lebanon and attacking Israel in defiance of the democratically elected Lebanese government.

I've directed Secretary of State Rice to travel to the Middle East in the coming days to discuss the best ways to resolve this crisis with leaders in the region. Secretary Rice will make it clear that resolving the crisis demands confronting the terrorist group that launched the attacks and the nations that support it.

For many years, Syria has been a primary sponsor of Hizballah and it has helped provide Hizballah with shipments of Iranian made weapons. Iran's regime has also repeatedly defied the international community with its ambition for nuclear weapons and aid to terrorist groups. Their actions threaten the entire Middle East and stand in the way of resolving the current crisis and bringing lasting peace to this troubled region.

We're also concerned about the impact the current conflict is having on Lebanon's young democracy. This is a difficult and trying time for the people of Lebanon. Hizballah's practice of hiding rockets in civilian neighborhoods, and its efforts to undermine the democratically elected government have shown it to be no friend of Lebanon. By its actions, Hizballah has jeopardized Lebanon's tremendous advances and betrayed the Lebanese people.

Over the past week, nations like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have stepped forward to offer humanitarian aid and assistance to the Lebanese government. America and our allies will join these efforts. We're also working to help American citizens who wish to leave Lebanon. American military personnel and embassy officials are working hard to ensure this operation proceeds smoothly and safely. We continue to pray for the safety of all people in Lebanon - Americans, Lebanese, and citizens of other countries.

America remains committed to lasting peace in the Middle East. The United States and our partners will continue to seek a return to the road map for peace in the Middle East, which sets out the path-

way to establishing a viable democratic Palestinian state that will live in peace with Israel. We will continue to support moderate leaders, like Palestinian Authority President Abbas. We will continue to call on Hamas to end its acts of terror. And now, more than ever, the Palestinians need leaders who are not compromised by terror and who will help the Palestinian people provide a future for their children based on regional peace and security.

In the long-term, this peace will come only by defeating the terrorist ideology of hatred and fear. The world's best hope for lasting security and stability across the Middle East is the establishment of free and just societies. America and our allies will act decisively because we know our security is at stake in this struggle and we know the cause of freedom will prevail. - Thank you for listening.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, STATEMENT AFTER MEETING
US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, RAMALLAH, 25 JULY 2006**

Ladies and gentlemen, in the name of Allah (inaudible) I would like to welcome Dr. Rice and thank her for the efforts she's making for a cease-fire and to implement a just and sustainable peace in the area. And I agree with President Bush and Dr. Rice that it is necessary to deal with the problems at their roots, that is, to find a radical execution of all (inaudible) objectives on the basis of Mr. Bush's vision and the diminishing of the Israeli occupation, which started in 1967 as was stated in the roadmap.

The attacks on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank must stop immediately. And we must reinforce that clearly between both sides so that we can restart a meaningful peace process that will lead to diminishment of the occupation and of the conflict. It is also necessary to stop the attacks against Lebanon, which is being destroyed at this very moment. A cease-fire must be reached and start negotiation with the Lebanese Government in order to solve this crisis and to exit this disastrous situation, which the Palestinian people is living.

The violence is the natural result of the absence of peace. Therefore, we must aim through a much more efforts in order to reinforce a comprehensive peace in the area away from any dictations or colonization activity and war and all of the policies that aim to create an effect on the ground. What is needed now is that immediate ceasefire and putting off all of the fires. And we will not save any effort to continue endeavoring to achieve a cooling down on mutual and continuous basis with the Israeli side and then revise that political process.

We are also endeavoring with all of the means available to us to ensure release of the Israeli soldiers, and in the same time we hope that Israel and the world realize the suffering of 10,000 Palestinian families whose sons and daughters are detained in the Israeli prisons. Some of them have been in such detention centers for about three decades.

On the internal level, we are making tremendous efforts, especially after the agreement on the Geneva documents to form a Palestinian government with an agenda on the basis of Arab and international legitimacy and which includes UN resolutions and the Quartet Resolution and the commitments made by the Palestinian National Authority. These efforts have withheld since the beginning of Israeli attacks against the Gaza Strip.

Finally, the suffering of the people in Lebanon in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank is beyond any endurance of any human being and an end must be put to this suffering. Once again, I would like to thank Dr. Rice for her visit and for the quite constructive talks we've had with her.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, STATEMENT AFTER
MEETING PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, RAMALLAH, 25 JULY 2006**

Thank you very much, Mr. President and let me start by again saying to you how very much admiration there is for you in the United States with the President for your courage and for your continued leadership of the Palestinian people. I know that this is an extraordinarily difficult time for the Palestinian people as well as for other innocent people in the region including, of course, the Lebanese and innocent Israelis, and we need to get to a sustainable peace for this region. That is really the problem. There must be a way for people to reconcile their differences and to move forward toward peace.

I had the opportunity to brief President Abbas on the efforts that we are making to bring about an urgent but enduring cease-fire in Lebanon, one that can deal with the causes of extremism that began this crisis and that can also lead to the establishment of sovereignty for the Lebanese Government throughout its territory and the ability then to act on the basis of Resolution 1559 (inaudible). And I also briefed the President on what we will be doing at the Rome conference to try and move that agenda forward.

I assured the President that we have great concerns about the sufferings of innocent people throughout the region. In that regard we talked, of course, about the fact that even as the Lebanon situation resolves we must remain focused on what is happening here in the Palestinian territories on our desires to get back on a course that will lead ultimately to the President's vision and deep vision of President Abbas - President Bush's vision, but indeed the vision of President Abbas, of two states living side by side in peace. It is important that we end the Gaza crisis and I know that the President is working hard to do that and to create the conditions on which that can end. But I also said to the President that I have been speaking with the Israelis about the need to implement the November agreement on movement and access so that the Palestinian people can have a means for economic - their economic health and that the humanitarian considerations and concerns of the Palestinian people can be taken care of.

All and all, this was a very useful and constructive discussion. We are working with the Palestinian Authority and with its duly elected President on multiple fronts, on the security front, on the economic front. The United States continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people and we have done all that we can to reprogram and to program even more humanitarian assistance. But we need to be able to make progress because the Palestinian people have lived too long in violence and in a sense of the daily humiliations that go along with the circumstances here.

And so, Mr. President, you have our pledge that our common work of bringing a two-state solution to the people of Palestine and to the people of Israel that we will not tire in our efforts. And I thank you again for welcoming me here and I look forward to our continuing work.



**STATEMENT BY THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE
OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE,
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 27 JULY 2006**

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People expresses its grave concern over the ongoing Israeli military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which has resulted in many Palestinian civilian casualties and a major humanitarian crisis.

Since Israel, the occupying Power, started its major military operation in the Gaza Strip on 28 June 2006, following the capture of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian groups, more than 130 Palestinians have been killed, many of whom were innocent civilians, including more than 30 children. Hundreds of Palestinians were wounded. While overshadowed by the ongoing hostilities in Lebanon, Israel's military operations in Gaza and the West Bank continue unabated. Yesterday, Israeli forces killed 23 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including three children and other civilians.

Moreover, the military operations of the occupying Power are also deliberately causing a major humanitarian crisis among the innocent civilian population. The destruction of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, including the only power station, as well as the closure of all crossing points in and out of Gaza, render daily living conditions unbearable and hamper any sustained international relief efforts. Almost 80 per cent of the population in Gaza are now living under the poverty line, and the health situation is further deteriorating, due especially to the lack of electricity, which is needed to operate water wells and to provide hospital services.

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People condemns the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of Israel's military might against the Palestinian population. Deliberate attacks by Israeli forces against civilian property and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip violate international humanitarian law. The continued closure of the crossing points to the Strip constitutes collective punishment of an entire innocent population. Israel needs to be reminded that, as an occupying Power, it is bound under international law to protect and safeguard the civilian Palestinian population, as well as their basic human rights.

The Bureau of the Committee condemns the killing of innocent civilians by either side, which seriously endangers, inflames and destabilizes the already fragile situation. It denounces also rocket attacks on Israel and calls for a cessation of these activities by Palestinian armed groups.

The Bureau of the Committee calls upon Israel to end its military actions against the Palestinian population. It reminds Israel, the occupying Power, that it is bound by the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War that obliges the parties to protect civilians during hostilities. Its applicability to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has been repeatedly confirmed by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Israel must end its incursions into Gaza, cease offensive military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, withdraw its forces to their original positions outside Gaza, and release, immediately and unconditionally, recently jailed cabinet members and parliamentarians, as well as other Palestinian prisoners. The Bureau of the Committee also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the captured Israeli soldier.

In light of the continued and flagrant violations by Israel of major stipulations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Bureau of the Committee calls for the urgent resumption of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to ensure respect for the Convention. Israel should also be held responsible for the caused destruction of civilian infrastructure and provide for its reconstruction without delay.

The Bureau of the Committee welcomes the signing of a National Conciliation Document by the major Palestinian political organizations, the decision to form a national unity Government, and the designation of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas as the person in charge with negotiations with Israel. These have been encouraging developments and should be supported by Israel and the international community. Recent meetings by the Foreign Ministers of France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States with President Abbas in Ramallah should be followed by a political dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

The Bureau of the Committee considers that a long-term solution to the conflict can only be achieved through a sustained diplomatic and political process that addresses the root causes of the conflict. That can only be achieved by forceful and continued international engagement, leading the parties back to a serious and credible resumption of the peace process aimed at the emergence of an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State living side by side, in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. The Bureau of the Committee reiterates that the question of Palestine is at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its peaceful settlement is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East.



**MAYOR OF LONDON, KEN LIVINGSTONE, STATEMENT ON ISRAELI
TERROR IN LEBANON, 5 AUGUST 2006**

*[The statement was sent as a message of support to the 'ceasefire now' demonstration
that took place in London the same day.]*

I want to welcome this demonstration to London. Your slogan for an immediate ceasefire has the support of the majority of the people of London, Britain and the entire world.

Given its financial and military dependence on the United States, Israel could not continue its massacres of civilians and the destruction of the civilian infrastructure of Lebanon and Gaza for one more day if there was a united demand for a ceasefire from the international community.

That is being blocked by the U.S., unfortunately supported by government policy in this country. We must fight to reverse this, including by a recall of parliament to allow MPs to discuss the issue.

In order to get civilians out of the firing line immediately, there should be a simultaneous ceasing of Israeli air attacks on Lebanon and of rocket attacks into Israel.

This week it was revealed that Israel's destruction of Lebanon was planned before the capture of the two Israeli soldiers. Indeed, it is well known that Israel illegally holds nearly ten thousand Palestinian captives and has been holding Lebanese prisoners for many, many years.

If their concern is captured soldiers, let all prisoners held by all sides be released immediately.

This conflict has seen the collapse of Israel's entire strategy of imposing unilateral solutions on the Palestinians and its neighbours by building a 'separation wall'. It is now clear that all sides can strike deep into one another's territory and no wall will remove that threat.

There will be no unilateral solution. The only way to solve this conflict is for Israel to negotiate with the democratically elected Palestinian Authority and the governments of Israel's neighbours to reach a comprehensive settlement based on the implementation of all United Nation resolutions – which must include the commitment by Israel to withdraw from all of the territories it has occupied since 1967 in contravention of UN resolutions.



**CHURCH-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE HOLY LAND,
STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN LEBANON AND THE
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, 7 AUGUST 2006**

*"Those who desire to see good days...Let them turn away from evil and do good;
Let them seek peace and pursue it." (1 Peter 3: 10, 11).*

The undersigned Church Related Organizations, appalled by the destruction and use of blatant military force by Israel in both Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories, have gathered in prayer at St. Stephan's Cathedral in Jerusalem. The sadness and the sense of despair that have taken over these holy lands as hundreds have perished, homes destroyed, thousands injured and made refugees and essential service infrastructure purposely targeted, highlight the immoral logic of war and the use of military force.

The responsibilities of the international community have most disappointingly been absent as governments and the powers that have allowed the progress of destruction to go on in order to supposedly prepare the ground for a politically agreeable ceasefire. This shows the double standard of world powers and it also sends a message that evokes anger and frustration of millions of ordinary citizens across the world, thus worsening the already bad situation as there is a clear absence of leadership.

We in the Holy Land, source of divine inspiration and monotheistic beliefs, are as frustrated as our fellow world citizens with the double standards of the United States and other allegedly democratic countries when it comes to dealing with the Middle East conflict and its just and lasting resolution. Security is not exclusive nor can it be used as an excuse to justify horrendous acts of military force and abuse and continued occupation instead of subscribing to a political negotiating process that would have spared all of us in this region the pain and suffering of the last few weeks and years.

We call upon religious forums of all persuasions as well as our partners, churches and civil society organizations and free citizens of the world:

- To condemn in the strongest possible language the ongoing war crimes inflicted on Lebanon and Palestine, and to call upon governments and international bodies to work for an immediate end to the bloodshed and for a lasting and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- To address the General Secretary of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan with a clear message that the UN needs to take a serious stand and assert its role in the Middle East region. It is high time for the UN to implement its resolutions pertaining to the Middle East conflict.
- To inform and raise awareness in their societies and communities about the root causes of the Arab/Israeli conflict; the violations of human rights that this conflict continues to generate and the need for a just and lasting solution to this long drawn conflict that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people.
- To recognize the desperate humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Lebanon and to respond to the appeals of relief and aid at this critical time.
- To identify with the victims and all those who suffer physical, psychological and material ill effects due to this war and continued Israeli occupation in the Palestinian Territories that they may have courage to withstand these terrible times.
- To continue with prayers so as this situation of war and enmity may be lifted and that a just and lasting peace will reign in this region and usher in an era characterized by respect for human rights, justice and insistence on political solutions rather than the use of blatant force and merciless military machines.

Signatories: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center (Sabeel)
 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Palestine
 The East Jerusalem YMCA
 Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR)/MECC
 Near East Council of Churches (NECC) - Gaza
 Caritas Jerusalem
 International Christian Committee – ICC Jerusalem



**UN SECURITY COUNCIL, RESOLUTION 1701 ON THE LEBANON CRISIS,
 NEW YORK, 11 AUGUST 2006**

*[The resolution, passed unanimously, aimed at ending the conflict
 between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.]*

The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on Lebanon, in particular resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 520 (1982), 1559 (2004), 1655 (2006), 1680 (2006) and 1697 (2006), as well as the statements of its president on the situation in Lebanon, in particular the statements of 18 June, 2000, of 19 October, 2004, of 4 May 2005, of 23 January 2006 and of 30 July 2006;

Expressing its utmost concern at the continuing escalation of hostilities in Lebanon and in Israel since Hezbollah's attack on Israel on 12 July 2006, which has already caused hundreds of deaths and injuries on both sides, extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons;

Emphasising the need for an end of violence, but at the same time emphasising the need to address urgently the causes that have given rise to the current crisis, including by the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers;

Mindful of the sensitivity of the issue of prisoners and encouraging the efforts aimed at urgently settling the issue of the Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel;

Welcoming the efforts of the Lebanese prime minister and the commitment of the government of Lebanon, in its seven-point plan, to extend its authority over its territory, through its own legitimate armed forces, such that there will be no weapons without the consent of the government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the government of Lebanon, welcoming also its commitment to a UN force that is supplemented and enhanced in numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operation, and bearing in mind its request in this plan for an immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces from southern Lebanon;

Determined to act for this withdrawal to happen at the earliest;

Taking due note of the proposals made in the seven-point plan regarding the Shebaa farms area;

Welcoming the unanimous decision by the government of Lebanon on 7 August 2006 to deploy a Lebanese armed force of 15,000 troops in south Lebanon as the Israeli army withdraws behind the Blue Line and to request the assistance of additional forces from Unifil as needed, to facilitate the entry of the Lebanese armed forces into the region and to restate its intention to strengthen the Lebanese armed forces with material as needed to enable it to perform its duties;

Aware of its responsibilities to help secure a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict;

Determining that the situation in Lebanon constitutes a threat to international peace and security;

1. Calls for a full cessation of hostilities based upon, in particular, the immediate cessation by Hezbollah of all attacks and the immediate cessation by Israel of all offensive military operations;
2. Upon full cessation of hostilities, calls upon the government of Lebanon and Unifil as authorised by paragraph 11 to deploy their forces together throughout the South and calls upon the government of Israel, as that deployment begins, to withdraw all of its forces from southern Lebanon in parallel;
3. Emphasises the importance of the extension of the control of the government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1559 (2004) and resolution 1680 (2006), and of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, for it to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the government of Lebanon;
4. Reiterates its strong support for full respect for the Blue Line;
5. Also reiterates its strong support, as recalled in all its previous relevant resolutions, for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders, as contemplated by the Israeli-Lebanese General Armistice Agreement of 23 March 1949;
6. Calls on the international community to take immediate steps to extend its financial and humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese people, including through facilitating the safe return of displaced persons and, under the authority of the government of Lebanon, reopening airports and harbours, consistent with paragraphs 14 and 15, and calls on it also to consider further assistance in the future to contribute to the reconstruction and development of Lebanon;
7. Affirms that all parties are responsible for ensuring that no action is taken contrary to paragraph 1 that might adversely affect the search for a long-term solution, humanitarian access to civilian populations, including safe passage for humanitarian convoys, or the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons, and calls on all parties to comply with this responsibility and to cooperate with the Security Council;
8. Calls for Israel and Lebanon to support a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution based on the following principles and elements:
 - Full respect for the Blue Line by both parties;
 - security arrangements to prevent the resumption of hostilities, including the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL as authorised in paragraph 11, deployed in this area;

- Full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), that require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that, pursuant to the Lebanese cabinet decision of July 27, 2006, there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese state;
 - No foreign forces in Lebanon without the consent of its government;
 - No sales or supply of arms and related materiel to Lebanon except as authorized by its government;
 - Provision to the United Nations of all remaining maps of land mines in Lebanon in Israel's possession;
9. Invites the secretary general to support efforts to secure as soon as possible agreements in principle from the government of Lebanon and the government of Israel to the principles and elements for a long-term solution as set forth in paragraph 8, and expresses its intention to be actively involved;
 10. Requests the secretary general to develop, in liaison with relevant international actors and the concerned parties, proposals to implement the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), including disarmament, and for delineation of the international borders of Lebanon, especially in those areas where the border is disputed or uncertain, including by dealing with the Shebaa farms area, and to present to the Security Council those proposals within 30 days;
 11. Decides, in order to supplement and enhance the force in numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operations, to authorize an increase in the force strength of Unifil to a maximum of 15,000 troops, and that the force shall, in addition to carrying out its mandate under resolutions 425 and 426 (1978):
 - a. Monitor the cessation of hostilities;
 - b. Accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the South, including along the Blue Line, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon as provided in paragraph 2;
 - c. Coordinate its activities related to paragraph 11 (b) with the government of Lebanon and the government of Israel;
 - d. Extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons;
 - e. Assist the Lebanese armed forces in taking steps towards the establishment of the area as referred to in paragraph 8;
 - f. Assist the government of Lebanon, at its request, to implement paragraph 14;
 12. Acting in support of a request from the government of Lebanon to deploy an international force to assist it to exercise its authority throughout the territory, authorizes Unifil to take all necessary action in areas of deployment of its forces and as it deems within its capabilities, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilised for hostile activities of any kind, to resist attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council, and to protect United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers, and, without prejudice to the responsibility of the government of Lebanon, to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence;
 13. Requests the secretary general urgently to put in place measures to ensure Unifil is able to carry out the functions envisaged in this resolution, urges member states to consider making appropriate contributions to Unifil and to respond positively to requests for assistance from the Force, and expresses its strong appreciation to those who have contributed to Unifil in the past;
 14. Calls upon the government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel and requests Unifil as authorised in paragraph 11 to assist the government of Lebanon at its request;
 15. Decides further that all states shall take the necessary measures to prevent, by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft:
 - a. the sale or supply to any entity or individual in Lebanon of arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned, whether or not originating in their territories, and;

- b. the provision to any entity or individual in Lebanon of any technical training or assistance related to the provision, manufacture, maintenance or use of the items listed in subparagraph (a) above, except that these prohibitions shall not apply to arms, related material, training or assistance authorised by the government of Lebanon or by Unifil as authorised in paragraph 11;
16. Decides to extend the mandate of Unifil until 31 August 2007, and expresses its intention to consider in a later resolution further enhancements to the mandate and other steps to contribute to the implementation of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution;
17. Requests the secretary general to report to the Council within one week on the implementation of this resolution and subsequently on a regular basis;
18. Stresses the importance of, and the need to achieve, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all its relevant resolutions including its resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973;
19. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.



LATIN PATRIARCH AND LOCAL HEADS OF CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM, STATEMENT ON “THE JEWISH DECLARATION ON CHRISTIAN ZIONISM”, 22 AUGUST 2006

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”(Matthew 5:9)

Christian Zionism is a modern theological and political movement that embraces the most extreme ideological positions of Zionism, thereby becoming detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel. The Christian Zionist programme provides a worldview where the Gospel is identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism. In its extreme form, it lacks an emphasis on apocalyptic events leading to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today. We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as false teaching that corrupts the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation.

We further reject the contemporary alliance of Christian Zionist leaders and organizations with elements in the governments of Israel and the United States that are presently imposing their unilateral pre-emptive borders and domination over Palestine. This inevitably leads to unending cycles of violence that undermine the security of all peoples of the Middle East and the rest of the world.

We reject the teachings of Christian Zionism that facilitate and support these policies as they advance racial exclusivity and perpetual war rather than the gospel of universal love, redemption and reconciliation taught by Jesus Christ. Rather than condemn the world to the doom of Armageddon we call upon everyone to liberate themselves from the ideologies of militarism and occupation. Instead, let them pursue the healing of the nations!

We call upon Christians in Churches on every continent to pray for the Palestinian and Israeli people, both of whom are suffering as victims of occupation and militarism. These discriminative actions are turning Palestine into impoverished ghettos surrounded by exclusive Israeli settlements. The establishment of the illegal settlements and the construction of the Separation Wall on confiscated Palestinian land undermines the viability of a Palestinian state as well as peace and security in the entire region.

We call upon all Churches that remain silent, to break their silence and speak for reconciliation with justice in the Holy Land.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to the following principles as an alternative way:

We affirm that all people are created in the image of God. In turn they are called to honor the dignity of every human being and to respect their inalienable rights.

We affirm that Israelis and Palestinians are capable of living together within peace, justice and security.

We affirm that Palestinians are one people, both Muslim and Christian. We reject all attempts to subvert and fragment their unity.

We call upon all people to reject the narrow world view of Christian Zionism and other ideologies that privilege one people at the expense of others.

We are committed to non-violent resistance as the most effective means to end the illegal occupation in order to attain a just and lasting peace.

With urgency we warn that Christian Zionism and its alliances are justifying colonization, apartheid and empire-building.

God demands that justice be done. No enduring peace, security or reconciliation is possible without the foundation of justice. The demands of justice will not disappear. The struggle for justice must be pursued diligently and persistently but non-violently.

"What does the Lord require of you, to act justly, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

This is where we take our stand. We stand for justice. We can do no other.

Justice alone guarantees a peace that will lead to reconciliation with a life of security and prosperity for all the peoples of our Land. By standing on the side of justice, we open ourselves to the work of peace - and working for peace makes us children of God.

"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Cor 5:19)

(Signed) His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem
Archbishop Swerios Malki Mourad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem
Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, STATEMENT FOLLOWING A MEETING
WITH UN SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN, RAMALLAH, 30 AUGUST 2006**

I am pleased to welcome His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan and his accompanying delegation in Ramallah. I appreciate his initiative to visit Palestine at this difficult moment while the region, especially Lebanon, suffers through a series of complicated events.

I would like to express my great gratitude for his personal efforts and his continued desire to achieve peace, particularly in the Middle East. I take this opportunity to thank the United Nations and its sub-organizations for their effective role in assisting the Palestinian people and easing their suffering, especially those working in Palestine and serving Palestinian refugees in exile.

Today we held important talks which discussed the serious situation in the Palestinian and Lebanese territories and in the area, and discussed ways out of this crisis in light of the Israeli occupation practices of military attacks, destruction of infrastructure and institutions, assassinations, invasions, arrests, siege, closure and the policy of collective punishment. We emphasized the necessity to release Palestinian ministers, members of parliament, leaders, more than ten thousand prisoners, cease settlement expansion, the construction of the Wall and Israel's practices in Jerusalem. We also spoke about the necessity to lift the economic siege and end the closure of crossing points. We requested

from the secretary general to speed the work of the UN registry for wall victims and the resulting damage that will be established.

We explained to the Secretary General our continued efforts to form a national unity government on the basis of a platform that can attract international and regional support, end the state of siege, achieve mutual and simultaneous calm (*tahdiya*) between Palestinians and Israelis and end the issue of the abducted soldier and the thousands of Palestinian prisoners.

We are also exerting efforts at the Arab and international levels to find a permanent solution to the Middle East issue by raising it again in its totality before the Security Council during the coming round of the General Assembly in order to invest in the realization of the international community that military force and the continued occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories will not achieve peace. Security and stability can be attained only by guaranteeing the return of legal rights to the Palestinian people, implementing the resolutions of international legality, establishing independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and resolving the issue of Palestinian refugees.

Your Excellency the Secretary General, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to you and to the United Nations and its organizations, and we trust that will exert extensive efforts during the coming round of the General Assembly to support Arab and international efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.



**INTERNATIONAL DONOR CONFERENCE ON THE HUMANITARIAN
SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES,
CHAIR'S SUMMARY, STOCKHOLM, 1 SEPTEMBER 2006**

The conference was co-hosted by Norway and Spain, and was a follow-up to the technical meeting held in Geneva on 14 July 2006. It was prepared and carried out with the active participation of the Office of the President of the Palestinian Authority, and addressed immediate funding needs under the revised United Nations consolidated appeal as well as underlying policy concerns, including movement and access issues.

The conference was attended by 35 countries, more than 10 UN agencies, the EC, the Red Cross Movement and a number of international organisations, making the conference truly global.

During the conference, the Office of the Palestinian President and the United Nations presented assessments of the most immediate needs and policy concerns in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In Gaza in particular, some 1.4 million people, half of them children, live under extremely difficult conditions as a result of the currently closure regime, military operations and violence, virtually no payments of civil servant salaries, rampant unemployment, reduced electricity and water supply. The conference also agreed that the international community should address the grave environmental situation at the Gaza strip without delay.

The conference recognized that the difficult humanitarian situation in Gaza is manmade and caused by continued conflict, violence, and occupation. Several delegations stressed the need for both parties of the conflict to respect international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and to ensure the protection of civilians. In this context it is important to emphasize that a negotiated settlement of the conflict, based upon the demands of the quartet, the road map and international law, is the single most important factor for an improvement of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The conference reiterated that unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance to the affected population in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is an obligation under international humanitarian law and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The participants further noted that the right to receive humanitarian assistance is a fundamental humanitarian principle, which should be enjoyed by all, who are in need.

The need for rehabilitation and reinvigoration of the Palestinian economy was stressed, and particularly the need to ease the movement and access restrictions imposed on the civilian population.

There is an urgent need to ensure free access and movement for relief and recovery operations in to and out of Gaza strip and the West bank. The most pressing need, currently, is the restoration of civilian infrastructure, including for electricity, water and sanitation. Other areas of great concern are health, agriculture, and education for Palestinian children.

The conference noted the complementary aspects of the UN Consolidated Appeals Process and the Temporary International Mechanism as important multilateral instruments to deal with the current situation. The meeting commended the progress reported by the EC in implementing the TIM and stressed the need to fully implement the mechanism. Reaffirming the principles agreed upon by the Quartet, the meeting underscored the importance of maintaining effective structures within the Palestinian authority to provide for the Palestinian people. A further deterioration of the Authority's institutional capacity risks causing severe long term effects to the Palestinian society.

Many delegates stressed the importance that Israel releases the Palestinian VAT and tax funds of approximately 500 million USD without delay. This would meet the most urgent Palestinian needs.

The financial, economical and political requirements for early recovery and reconstruction were discussed, and the delegations stressed the need for flexible funding in this regard. Even in this respect the issue of access was raised as a major concern.

This conference resulted in a total amount pledged in the order of 200 million USD. Approximately 110 million USD is announced to meet humanitarian needs and of that amount 55 million USD covers the request of the Consolidated Appeal. This means that the coverage of the CAP has increased from 43 per cent to 58 per cent. In addition to this, Saudi Arabia also pledged 250 million USD. Most of the assistance to the Palestinian Territories will in this point of time be directed to meet the humanitarian needs.



**EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN
NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY, BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER, STATEMENT ON
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PLENARY,
STRASBOURG, 6 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Mr. President, Honourable Members,

The conflict in Lebanon, the violence in the Palestinian Territories, the suffering of civilians in northern Israel: these past months the prospect of a comprehensive peace has seemed further off than ever.

Yet, paradoxically, these conflicts – and the misery suffered by ordinary Lebanese, Israelis and Palestinians – have once more brought to the forefront the need for a negotiated, regional solution. They are stark and cruel reminder that security and stability cannot be imposed unilaterally, without dialogue or diplomacy.

This is a moment of distress and suffering in the Middle East, but I believe also one of opportunity; an opportunity that we must seize. It is specifically by mobilising the very considerable resources of the EU – from the political and security to the technical, economic and financial – and by deploying them in close cooperation with the rest of the international community, that we may be able to pull the Peace Process back onto its feet.

Mr. President, Honourable Members,

The EU is playing an unprecedented role. Europe is fully engaged with Lebanon and determined to play a strong role to support the implementation of UN Resolution 1701 and in finding lasting peace for the region.

EU Member States are making a decisive contribution to the expanded UNIFIL peacekeeping force in support of the rapid extension of the Lebanese government's authority throughout Lebanon. The EU is at the forefront of diplomatic efforts to remove the continuing air and sea blockade of Lebanon.

From the outset of the conflict the European Commission has been active on the ground, supporting our partners and their people when they most needed us. Over the past six weeks the Commission has mobilised and coordinated an important European response to the urgent needs caused by the conflict:

- From the second week of conflict, we have provided rapid humanitarian assistance. I was glad to learn that this Parliament has agreed to our request to mobilise further resources from the emergency reserve; this will allow ECHO to continue its action in support of essential early recovery, notably for water, sanitation and housing, bringing our total humanitarian support to over €50 million;
- The Commission helped coordinate and supported evacuation efforts – including €1 million in support of evacuation of third country nationals caught up in the conflict;
- On the ground, the Commission played an important role assessing the situation and setting up the first coordination exercise among donors. We are now working with the Lebanese Government, as well as with the UN and World Bank, to ensure that in the post-conflict phase this coordination will be led and informed by the Lebanese themselves;
- Commission also responded to the environmental disaster and has supported the Lebanese government through the Community Civil Protection Mechanism to address the environmental damage.

We are now working to assess and address the needs to rebuild Lebanon; to restore its infrastructure and to promote economic recovery, social development and political cohesion.

At the Stockholm Conference last week I announced a package of €42 million to support early recovery until the end of this year:

- €10 million for a Reconstruction Assistance Facility, ensuring rapid and effective identification, coordination and implementation of reconstruction and rehabilitation measures;
- Another €10 million to meet in a flexible and transparent manner the urgent priorities of the Lebanese Government;
- €4 million to support strengthening of the Rule of Law and the internal security forces,
- €8 million to help revive the economy, create jobs and generate family income.

I believe the European Commission has shown that it is ready to act and act fast! In the past month, we have mobilised our staff, our instruments, and well over €100 million of Community resources to come to the aid of Lebanon and its people.

Mr. President, Honourable Members,

The EU contribution to meeting specific and immediate needs is crucial to support the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701; to support a lasting settlement to the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah that has for too long destabilised Lebanon and threatened Israel.

The Middle East needs a strong, sovereign, unified and politically independent Lebanon, able to consolidate the fragile peace that has returned and to contain the very real risk of spill over of tension that remains.

And the Lebanese population must also feel the tangible benefits of the cessation of hostilities. A Beirut-driven reconstruction process will help in strengthening the role of the Lebanese Government. For this and in order to start with the reconstruction phase, the lifting of Israel's air and sea blockade is essential, and I join again UNSG Kofi Annan's call for its immediate removal.

Over the longer-term, the international community must remain engaged, with a focus on supporting institutional recovery and promoting Lebanese state-building efforts, including those undertaken via the national dialogue. That means pursuing the political, social and economic agenda already outlined

in the EU Lebanon Action Plan. It is not an exaggeration to say that the measures we identified together before the conflict are now more important than ever.

We must also work collectively with our Lebanese counterparts to ensure that conditions for long term stability are met, including removing the ambiguity surrounding the disarming of Hezbollah (which can only realistically be achieved as part of a process of political integration) and clarifying the status of the Shebaa farms.

Mr. President, Honourable Members,

We must not lose sight of the broader picture across the region. While international attention was drawn to Lebanon, the violence and suffering continued in the Palestinian territories, and Kassam rockets continued to fall on Israeli towns and villages.

In order to avoid further escalation we need a return by Palestinian militants to the 'calm' that held for most of 2005, the release of hostages, detainees and prisoners as well as progress on basic issues of movement and access, which hold the key to Palestinian economic recovery and to the creation of a viable Palestinian state. This should start with a rapid re-opening of the Gaza crossings, in particular the Rafah border supported by the EUBAM mission. The Commission is in principle ready to take further action to upgrade infrastructure and strengthen capacity on the basis of the Access and Movement Agreement of last November.

The context must be our long-standing aim of building up the institutions of a future Palestinian state, working with the Palestinian Authority. Which in turn means that the EU should be ready to respond pragmatically to the formation of a Palestinian national unity government. I repeat once more that we will engage with any government ready to work for peace by peaceful means.

We must not – and we do not - forget the plight of the Palestinian people. We have, via the Temporary International Mechanism, ensured access to clean water and sanitation in the Gaza Strip, kept hospitals and health care centres going through the summer and provided social allowance payments that have benefited more than 600,000 Palestinians.

But with continued political stalemate, closures, and frozen fiscal revenues the TIM can only provide temporary relief. We cannot go on like this for much longer. We must seek ways to improve access and movement, to get Israel to unblock the withheld Palestinian revenues, and to get the Palestinian Authority to ensure public order and security. We owe it to the parties, and they owe it to their own peoples.

Mr. President, Honourable Members,

The rapid escalation of violence this summer produced no victory, only victims. We see once more the failure of military action to resolve the long drawn-out conflicts of the Middle East.

Yet the status quo – which includes the slow chipping away of the credibility of a two-state solution, continued occupation and endemic violence - is itself a recipe for instability. It is also a recipe for interference by third parties and radicalism, fuelled by injustices either perceived or real.

There is, then, really only one choice. We need to renew the political perspective upon which the Peace Process depends, including when it comes for example to our position on the primacy of the 1967 borders, and we must do everything possible to bring all the parties back to the negotiating table. By focusing on some concrete and pragmatic measures that can bring about some positive and tangible results, we can help to create the appropriate climate and facilitate a re-engagement between parties.

Decisive action is needed to get the parties back on the track to a negotiated peace. I have called for an early meeting of President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert; I hope they can address the issue of the hostages and detainees as well as the other pressing questions of violence, access and finances. It is also time for Israel and Lebanon to establish channels for dialogue, and for Syria to be brought back into the equation as they show readiness to do their part on the implementation of the relevant

UN Security Council Resolutions. Iran, too, must take its responsibility and demonstrate its readiness to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

Many ideas have been floated on a comprehensive approach to peace in the Middle East. The Arab League initiative, in particular, deserves our full attention.

At the Gymnich meeting last weekend many voices called for greater EU leadership in the Middle East. I believe they are right: We have to turn the tragic events of this summer into an opportunity for a long term settlement of the still open conflicts in the region.

Our credibility, that of the Quartet and that of the UN, is at stake. - Thank you, Mr President.



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, STRASBOURG, 7 SEPTEMBER 2006

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in the Middle East, in particular its resolution of 1 June 2006 on the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories and the role of the EU⁷,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 1701(2006), 1559(2004), 520(1982), 426(1978), 338(1973) and 242(1967),
- having regard to the statement issued by the European Parliament's Conference of Presidents on 20 July 2006,
- having regard to the Co-Chairmen Statement of the Rome International Conference for Lebanon of 26 July 2006,
- having regard to the conclusions of the extraordinary General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting of 25 August 2006,
- having regard to the statement of the Bureau of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) adopted on 24 August 2006,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery, held on 31 August 2006, [taken from para. 13]
- having regard to the Geneva Conventions on international humanitarian law,
- having regard to the statement made by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories at the UN Human Rights Council special session held in Geneva on 5 July 2006,
- having regard to Articles 15, 16 and 19 of the EU Treaty,
- having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. Whereas the conflict in Lebanon has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe, which has caused hundreds of deaths and injuries on both sides, extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, and has not come to an end with the ceasefire,
- B. Deeply shocked by the outbreak of hostilities in south Lebanon, the attacks by Hezbollah and the overreaction in the use of force by the Israeli army, which were a serious threat to international peace and security,
- C. Noting the call by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to examine whether breaches of international law occurred during the conflict,
- D. Having regard to the serious extent of the Israeli bombings and firing of rockets by Hezbollah and Palestinian militias against civilian populations,
- E. Whereas UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1701 calls on the Government of Lebanon to extend its authority over the territory of the country through its own legitimate armed forces, and has decided to increase the force strength of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and extend its mandate,

⁷ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2006)0237.

- F. Whereas UNSC Resolution 1701 calls upon the Government of Israel to withdraw all of its forces from south Lebanon as the deployment of UNIFIL begins and to put to an end to the blockade of airports and harbours in Lebanon,
- G. Emphasising the role that a totally democratic and sovereign Lebanon can play in the implementation of a solution to the Middle-East crisis and in the development of a strong Euro-Mediterranean Partnership,
- H. Stressing that the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Territories is worsening in spite of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) set up by the international community in order to continue providing assistance to the Palestinian population,
- I. Whereas the Middle East peace process is in a political and diplomatic deadlock although a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is needed for the establishment of peace and security in the whole region,
- J. Whereas the European Union has a special responsibility for peace and security in the Middle East, which is Europe's neighbourhood, and whereas the instruments and methods for the coordination of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) must therefore be improved, including through the adoption of a common position in the framework of the CFSP and on the basis of Articles 15 and 16 of the EU Treaty,
1. Expresses its serious concern over the extension and intensity of the military conflict in south Lebanon and deeply regrets the casualties among civilians, soldiers and UN observers in Lebanon and/or Israel, and the massive destruction of infrastructure; reaffirms that there is no military solution to the conflict in the Middle East;
 2. Stresses, in this connection, that no ceasefire can be lasting without the parties directly or indirectly involved showing the political will to tackle the root causes of the recent crisis;
 3. Reiterates the call for the immediate release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers and of the members of the Palestinian Government and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council imprisoned by Israel;
 4. Welcomes the unanimous adoption by the UNSC of Resolution 1701, which establishes the conditions for putting an end to the military operations and reinforces UNIFIL with a strong mandate aimed at increasing its capacity to prevent any violation of the ceasefire, assist the Lebanese Government in exercising full sovereignty and effective control over the territory of the country, including the territorial waters, support the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559 and contribute to the protection of the civilian population and UNIFIL itself;
 5. Welcomes the Lebanese Government's decision to deploy its forces in south Lebanon and the Israeli army's agreement to withdraw behind the Blue Line as provided for in UNSC Resolution 1701; welcomes the Lebanese Government's strong support for an enhanced role for UNIFIL;
 6. Considers that the UNIFIL mandate should represent a serious commitment to providing adequate assistance to the Lebanese Government in the establishment of effective control and security arrangements, as determined in UNSC Resolutions 1559 and 1701;
 7. Welcomes the outcome of the abovementioned GAERC meeting, in particular the full support expressed by the Council for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701, and the Member States' commitment to provide about 7 000 soldiers out of a maximum of 15 000 UNIFIL forces;
 8. Underlines the active role taken by France and Italy; fully supports the decision that France will continue to assume the command of UNIFIL until February 2007 and that Italy will then take over ground control; stresses, nevertheless, that any duplication of command structures must be avoided;
 9. Stresses, nevertheless, the importance of clearly and adequately defining the mandate, rules of engagement, structure and competences of UNIFIL, if necessary to be agreed under a new UNSC resolution, which should take into account the lessons learnt from previous UN peace-keeping engagements, notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 10. Considers it vital that all weapon imports into Lebanon be directed only to the official Lebanese army and asks the Lebanese Government to ensure, in cooperation with UNIFIL, the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559; stresses also the importance for all the EU Member States to act in line with the requirements of Resolution 1701 related to arms supplies; and stresses that this

settlement should lead to the disarming of all militias, including that of Hezbollah, and measures to prevent the entry of arms into Lebanon;

11. Calls on Member States to respect strictly the Code of Conduct on Arms Export as regards all deliveries of weapons to the region;
12. Calls on the European Union to undertake to work with all the parties involved and calls on these parties to honour their commitments scrupulously, with a view to the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701, so as to allow access for emergency humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced persons under the safest possible conditions; urges, in this context, the lifting of the air and sea blockade of Lebanon and recalls, in the light of the relevant provisions of Resolution 1701, that establishing effective measures in the area of arms, related materials, training or assistance, is a priority;
13. Points out that strong, quick and effective efforts are needed for the reconstruction of Lebanon; welcomes, in this regard, the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery, in which donor countries decided to contribute substantively to the reconstruction of the country, and the Commission and Member States announced the grant of EUR 120 million in humanitarian aid;
14. Calls on the Council and the Commission to continue their efforts to establish a living partnership with democratic political forces and civil society, in order to support further democratisation in Lebanon after the events of March 2005;
15. Calls urgently on Iran and Syria to play a constructive role, especially with regard to the implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1559 and 1701; calls specifically on Syria to step up controls on its side of the Lebanese-Syrian border in accordance with Resolution 1701, which requires neighbouring countries to prevent supplies of weapons to non-State entities;
16. Calls on the Council and the Commission to restart a genuine dialogue with Syria in order to engage this country in peace efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict; expects that the UN Secretary-General's report provided for in UNSC Resolution 1701 on the delineation of the international borders in Lebanon, including the dispute over the Shebaa farms area, will contribute to progress in this issue;
17. Calls for a comprehensive international high-level inquiry to be conducted with the good offices of the UN Secretary-General in Lebanon and Israel with a mandate to investigate reports of serious human rights violations, the plight of victims and the violation of humanitarian law;
18. Considers in this context that the European Union, as a major donor, and the international community should study ways of establishing possible conditions of accountability;
19. Welcomes the early action of the Commission's monitoring and information centre planning to tackle the oil slick that has contaminated more than 50 km of Lebanese coastline; stresses the need for measures to fight pollution in certain areas and especially against the disastrous impact of the oil slick off the Lebanese shoreline; calls on the Member States and the Commission to provide assistance and a response within the framework of the Pollution Prevention and Response Protocol to the Barcelona Convention and through the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea, which operates within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan;
20. Deeply deplores the deteriorating situation of the population and civilian infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank; asks all sides to break the vicious circle of attacks and counter-attacks, which have resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure;
21. Stresses the need to bring the Middle East peace process back to the top of the international political agenda; calls on the Quartet (UN, EU, USA and Russia) to revive the implementation of the Roadmap with a view to the annual UN General Assembly session in September 2006; reaffirms that the two-state solution, with an Israeli and a Palestinian state co-existing in peace and security, is a key condition for a peaceful and lasting settlement in the Middle East;
22. Calls on the Council and the Commission to continue to guarantee, together with the international community, essential humanitarian aid for the Palestinian population; demands that the TIM be reinforced and extended in terms of duration and resources; calls on the Israeli Government urgently to resume the transfer of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues; calls on Israel to permit the movement of people, respecting the Agreement on Movement and Access in Rafah and at other border crossings in Gaza;

23. Restates its support for the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, in his efforts to promote a national dialogue between the various Palestinian parties, with the aim of setting up a new Palestinian government;
24. Considers that the presence of a multinational force in Lebanon could be taken as an exemplary model to be followed in the negotiation process for a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
25. Calls on the Council to make every effort to convene an international peace conference – such as the Madrid Conference in 1991 – in order to find a comprehensive, lasting and viable solution to the problems in the area, based on the relevant UNSC resolutions, which includes the right of Israel to live within secure and recognised borders and the right to a viable state for the Palestinians based on the Occupied Territories, and to deal in full with security and disarmament issues; considers that a unilateral approach by any of the parties concerned must be rejected;
26. Considers the involvement of the League of Arab States to be essential in this context; considers the 'Beirut Plan' of 2002, agreed by the member countries of the League of Arab States, and the Geneva Initiative, as important contributions to the negotiations, which should be duly taken into account;
27. Takes the view that the EMPA, as the Barcelona Process' only parliamentary institution for elected representatives of the peoples of the southern Mediterranean shore and the European Union, must assume its responsibility for facilitating the resumption of dialogue and cooperation between the parties to the Middle-East situation; supports the EMPA Bureau's request to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Euromed Council of Foreign Ministers of the Barcelona Process as soon as possible;
28. Believes that in the medium to long term, the building of institutions uniting the countries of the Mediterranean basin, such as a Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank, will be the best guarantor of lasting peace and human development; and calls on EU Member States to strive for the creation of such institutions, rather than to seek bilateral agreements;
29. Is in favour of sending a fact-finding delegation to Lebanon, Palestine and Israel in order to monitor the situation, with special focus on the humanitarian and political conditions;
30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the President of the UN General Assembly, the governments and parliaments of Israel, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Iran, the USA and Russia, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.



**EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY, STATEMENT ON THE FORMATION OF
A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY IN PALESTINE, 12 SEPTEMBER 2006**

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes the announcement by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of agreement on the formation of a government of national unity.

The Presidency sees this as a positive development and hopes that it will create the conditions for a return to the process of negotiation between the Israeli and Palestinian sides. The Presidency reiterates the belief of the European Union that only a negotiated two-state solution can bring lasting peace to the Middle East.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS,
2749TH EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 15 SEPTEMBER 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council discussed the situation in the Middle East. It underlined that lasting peace and security in the region can only be ensured by a comprehensive settlement with a negotiated two-state solution to

- the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at its core. The Council underlined the importance of reinvigorating the Peace Process and requested the High Representative to pursue his efforts to this end.
2. The Council stressed its commitment to support the full implementation of UNSCR 1701, welcomed the declared commitment of all regional parties to this end, and commended the efforts of UNSG Annan. It welcomed the early deployment of the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon and the substantial contribution by EU Member States to the reinforced UNIFIL mission. It appreciated the significant contributions pledged by other countries. The Council called for a full and speedy implementation of UNSCR 1701, including the withdrawal of Israeli troops in parallel with the deployment of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Council welcomed the lifting of the Israeli air and sea blockade, which will ease the delivery of humanitarian aid and facilitate economic recovery, and the instrumental role played by EU Member States. The EU reiterated its call for the immediate release of the two abducted Israeli soldiers.
The Council invites the Presidency, the High Representative and the Commission to draw up a report on a possible European contribution to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 on the Lebanese-Syrian border.
 3. The Council underlined the EU's commitment to assist the Lebanese government in meeting emergency, humanitarian and environmental needs, launching the rehabilitation and reconstruction process, extending its authority throughout Lebanese territory and taking forward political, security, economic and social reforms. It called on all outside actors and neighbours to support this process. The Council welcomed the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery on 31 August. It noted that the EU/Lebanon ENP Action Plan provides an agreed framework through which the EU can assist the Government in implementing its reform agenda.
 4. The Council underlined its commitment to promoting tangible progress towards a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It welcomed the announcement by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on an agreement to form a government of national unity and expressed the hope that its political platform will reflect the Quartet principles and allow for early engagement. The Council welcomed the prospect of a meeting between PM Olmert and President Abbas in the near future with a view to re-launching negotiations. It called for an immediate end to violence by Palestinian factions as well as to Israeli military activity in the Palestinian territories. The Council reiterated its call for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier. It further repeated its call for the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators in Israeli custody. The Council reiterated the need for all parties to respect their Roadmap obligations. It renewed its call on the Israeli Government to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth of settlements. Ministers reiterated that the EU will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties.
 5. The Council expressed deep concern at the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories. In this context the Council recalled the strong EU commitment made at the Stockholm International Donor Conference on 1 September. It welcomed the expansion of the Temporary International Mechanism, by which the EU and its Member States have already channelled substantial resources directly to the Palestinian people, and agreed that its operation should be extended for a further three months. It encouraged donors and others in the region to make full use of the mechanism. The Council repeated its call on Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. The Council called for the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access and, in this regard, reiterated its continued commitment to EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah. It urged that Rafah and all other border-crossings be re-opened and remain open.



**QUARTET STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE,
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 20 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Quartet principals - United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in New York to discuss developments in the Middle East since their last meeting on 9 May.

Taking stock of recent developments in the region, the Quartet stressed the urgent need to make progress towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Quartet expressed its concern at the grave crisis in Gaza and the continued stalemate between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Quartet welcomed the efforts of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to form a Government of National Unity, in the hope that the platform of such a Government would reflect Quartet principles and allow for early engagement.

The Quartet underlined the urgent need for the parties to implement fully all aspects of the Agreement on Movement and Access. Accordingly, Rafah and all other passages should remain open, consistent with relevant agreements.

The Quartet encouraged greater donor support to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, with a particular emphasis on security-sector reform, reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and economic development. The Quartet commended the efforts of the World Bank and the European Union to facilitate needs-based assistance directly to the Palestinian people via the Temporary International Mechanism endorsed by the Quartet on 17 June. Mindful of the continuing needs of the Palestinian people, the Quartet endorsed the continuation and expansion of the Temporary International Mechanism for a three-month period, and agreed to again review the need for such a mechanism at the end of that period.

The Quartet noted that the resumption of transfers of tax and customs revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority would have a significant impact on the Palestinian economy. The Quartet encouraged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to consider resumption of such transfers via the Temporary International Mechanism to improve the economic and humanitarian conditions in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Quartet welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to request James D. Wolfensohn to report on the situation on the ground.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to the "Road Map" as the means to realize the goal of two democratic States - Israel and Palestine - living side by side in peace and security. The Quartet stressed the need for a credible political process in order to make progress towards a two-State solution through dialogue and parallel implementation of obligations. In this context, the Quartet welcomed the prospect of a meeting between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Abbas in the near future. The Quartet agreed to meet on a regular basis in the coming period at both the principals and envoys level, including with the parties and other regional partners, to monitor developments and actions taken by the parties and to discuss the way ahead.



**CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS, RESOLUTION ON
THE MIDDLE EAST, 9TH CONGRESS, JOHANNESBURG, 21 SEPTEMBER 2006**

[Unanimously adopted by the 1.8 million-strong Congress of South African Trade Unions.]

4.5.2 Middle East: NUMSA, Wits and Eastern Cape

Noting:

1. The merciless killing of civilians in particular children in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine.
2. The imprisonment of Iraqis, Palestinians and others by the U.S. administration and its allies.
3. These attacks are backed by the advanced capitalist economies in particular the U.S which arms and funds the Israel army.

Resolve:

1. The U.S. must withdraw all its forces unconditionally from Iraq and Afghanistan so that their people can determine their own future under the supervision of the United Nations.

2. Our government should impose sanctions against Israel until the aggression on Palestine and Lebanon is stopped.
3. We should step up the campaign for the release of Palestinians, Iraqis and other nations across the globe held by the U.S. and Israel.
4. COSATU members must boycott Israeli goods and demonstrations must be held at the embassies of Israel and the United States in South Africa.
5. The government must end with immediate effect the diplomatic ties with Israel including recalling the ambassador.
6. To strengthen the coalition against the wars in the Middle East.
7. Pledge our solidarity and support to the struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom and condemn in the strongest terms:
 - a. the war crimes that are currently being perpetrated against the people of Palestine and Lebanon;
 - b. the wanton destruction of life-sustaining infra-structure in Palestine and Lebanon;
 - c. the deliberate impotence of international agencies and either the silent complicity and/or the active support of most governments in these acts of terror;
 - d. the current and ongoing shipment of armaments from the US to Israel; and
 - e. the detention of almost 10 000 Lebanese and Palestinian people including women and children.
8. Demand that:
 - a. Israel immediately cease its aerial bombardments and military attacks on Palestinian territories and Lebanon.
 - b. Israel abides by the provisions of the international humanitarian law and human rights law, and refrains from imposing collective punishment on Palestinian civilians.
 - c. The international community holds Israel legally accountable for all crimes committed against civilian populations.
 - d. The international community implements diplomatic and trade sanctions against the State of Israel with immediate effect.
 - e. The international community holds Israel responsible for the compensation and reparation for the loss of life in Lebanon and Palestine.
 - f. The EU stop the severe sanctions imposed by Europe on the Palestinian Authority as a penalty for exercising their democratic right and electing a government of their choice.
 - g. The United Nations implements the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on Israel's Apartheid Wall.



FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTER ERKKI TUOMIOJA, STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, NEW YORK, 21 SEPTEMBER 2006

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Madam President,

The dramatic developments that we witnessed during the last months have again demonstrated the urgent need to move from violence and hatred to peace and confidence. I would like to thank the Arab League for its initiative to convene this session as also the European Union sees that the most pressing issue is to end the current stalemate of the peace process. There are no military or unilateral solutions to any of the challenges and problems of the Middle East. Lasting peace and security in the region can only be ensured by a comprehensive settlement with a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at its core.

The urgency to change the developments in the region is dictated first and foremost by the fact that the situation on the ground is deteriorating and we must urgently take measures to alleviate the situation of the Palestinian people. The economic and humanitarian situation is severe in the Palestinian Territories: 70 % of the population live under the poverty line, most of them children deprived of their basic needs.

The European Union has mobilised more resources than ever before to meet the urgent needs of the Palestinian people, including through the Temporary International Mechanism. This mechanism has allowed substantial resources to be channelled directly to the Palestinian people in the last few months, and it has now been extended. We encourage donors and others in the region to make full use of this mechanism. The European Union repeats its call on Israel to resume transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. These resources are needed in order to improve the severe situation of the Palestinians.

The humanitarian situation is directly connected to the question of access and movement. This is a major problem in the Palestinian Territories in general and in Gaza in particular. The European Union has stressed in its contacts with Israeli counterparts that the border crossings such as Rafah and Karni be opened and remain open. We urge the parties to urgently take concrete steps to implement their obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access, and in this regard, the European Union reiterates its continued commitment to EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah.

The viability of an agreed two-state solution is threatened by the continued enlargement of settlements and the continued building of the separation barrier on Palestinian land. The European Union will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties.

The European Union demands that Palestinian militants cease all violence directed towards Israel or other Palestinians. The Israeli soldier must be released immediately and unconditionally. The detained Palestinian ministers and legislators must also be released. The European Union also urges Israel to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including its obligation to protect civilians and not to use disproportionate measures. Security is not an exclusive matter for one party - it matters for everyone in the whole region.

The European Union stresses the need to solve underlying problems by political means. Therefore we welcome the announcement by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on an agreement to form a government of national unity. The European Union has expressed its hope that these negotiations will be rapidly and successfully concluded and that the new government's political platform will reflect the Quartet principles and allow for early engagement.

There is also a need to proceed on a diplomatic path regionally. This is why we need support for the peace process from all regional partners. The ultimate goal is to receive a comprehensive and sustainable peace in the Middle East. It is imperative to create new dynamics towards that goal.

The European Union welcomes the statement of the Quartet issued yesterday which reaffirms the commitment of the Quartet to the Roadmap. The Roadmap has as its aim the creation of two states living side by side in peace and security. In order to achieve this all parties must respect their obligations under the Roadmap. The European Union gives its full support to the Quartet's intention to meet on a regular basis in the coming period, as well as to actively engage with the parties and other regional partners to monitor developments and to discuss the way ahead. Thank you, Madam President.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, ADDRESS TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
61ST SESSION, NEW YORK, 21 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Your Excellency Madame President, Your Excellency United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Madame President,

I would like to start by congratulating you on your election to preside over this session, and to wish you success in achieving the objectives of the United Nations, which are accepted by all nations of the

world. These nations believe that this organization was created to protect international peace, human rights, and peoples' right to self-determination. Indeed, in the words of President Woodrow Wilson:

"Nowhere else in the world have noble men and women exhibited in more striking forms the beauty and energy of sympathy and helpfulness and counsel in their efforts to rectify wrong, alleviate suffering, and set the weak in the way of strength and hope."

Therefore, I hope that this session results in promoting cooperation between nations and peoples in pursuit of their common interest, namely the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, which are the basis for membership in this organization.

We highly commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan, for the effective role he played and the great efforts he exerted, and his wise leadership, during the past years to enhance the United Nations and reinvigorate its role. We also commend him for his efforts particularly towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

Madame President,

Only a few weeks ago, the fire of war stopped raging in Lebanon. Despite the gravity of the losses, destruction and tragedy, the international community expeditiously, effectively and successfully intervened to put an end to the war, and to provide support to the people and legitimate government of Lebanon, in order to safeguard its security and independence and to end the era of war on its soil. As I commend this international role, I hope that this positive and effective intervention extends politically and practically to resolve the root of all the conflicts and wars that have plagued our region over many decades. Indeed, after all the experiences of wars that we have been through, I need not to reconfirm the fact that without resolving the question of Palestine, and the continuation of the occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands since 1967, the elements of tension and conflagration, will keep the conflict alive, and will keep the door wide open to all forms of violence, terrorism, regional confrontations and global crises.

It is unfortunate today to see that international plans and initiatives, foremost amongst it the Road Map, which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, have reached a state of stagnation and even regression. Even calls for the resumption of negotiations are faced with preconditions. Despair and frustration thrive with the roar of bulldozers that build illegal settlements, change of the demographic nature of Jerusalem, and erect the Apartheid Separation Wall inside our occupied land and between its various parts. They thrive on the continuation of the frightful siege, through military checkpoints that have turned our cities and regions into reservations, on the persistent saga of killings and assassinations that have claimed hundreds of civilian lives, on home demolitions and on the ongoing arrests that have reached more than eight thousand Palestinians including parliamentarians and cabinet ministers, as well as some who have been languishing in suffering for three decades, and whose release and freedom is eagerly awaited by their families and whole nation.

Under these conditions, I can legitimately ask how the international community can expect extremism to retreat, or the waves of violence to ebb. How can we and all the forces of moderation and peace in our region forcefully intervene and convince our public opinion that there is hope on the horizon? Or that the option of dialogue, negotiation and international legitimacy - which is our strategic choice and the path which we relentlessly advocate, and which we will never abandon- will be fruitful and will have a real chance of success?

It is not only I who lives in the midst of this tragedy who must answer such a fundamental question. The whole international community, particularly influential powers, is called upon to provide tangible evidence that they will support the unconditional resumption of negotiations, and will provide them with a true international cover and support to ensure their success through the cessation of settlement activity, collective punishment, and separation walls. This will provide the positive atmosphere for launching negotiations and reaching their objectives in achieving a just peace based on the two-state solution as called for by President of the United States of America, George Bush.

Such a solution must be based on international legitimacy which was upheld in the Arab Peace Initiative through the establishment of the independent State of Palestine on the June 4th, 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, and reaching a just and agreed upon solution for the problem of the refugees – who constitute more than half of our Palestinian people – in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

We have heard lately from the Government of Israel that it will abandon the policy of unilateralism and one-sided actions. This is encouraging, provided that the alternative is not stagnation or the imposition of facts on the ground, but rather a return to the negotiation table and reaching a comprehensive solution to all of the permanent status issues, to ensure a secure future for our children and theirs.

Madame President,

I have recently sought, in tandem with all the strands of the Palestinian political spectrum, to establish a government of national unity that is consistent with international and Arab legitimacy and that corresponds to the principles established by the Quartet. Therefore, and based on our commitment to these criteria, I would like to reaffirm that any future Palestinian government will commit to all the agreements that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinian National Authority have committed to, particularly the Letters of Mutual Recognition exchanged between the two great late leaders Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin on September 9th, 1993. These letters contain mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, renunciation of violence, and commitment to negotiations as the path towards reaching a permanent solution that will lead to the establishment of the independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel.

Any future government will commit to imposing security and order, to ending the phenomena of multiple militias, indiscipline and chaos, and to the rule of law, since this is primarily a national Palestinian need.

The efforts that we have exerted are for the sole purpose of establishing a national unity government that has real substance, so as to achieve national Palestinian consensus around our national objectives which comply with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative, and around peaceful means for the realization of these objectives. When such a national consensus is reached, and when a new national unity government is established according to it, this must be viewed as a qualitative achievement, not a step backwards or a regression - even a limited one - from the path to which we have always been determinedly committed even in the face of the bleakest of conditions.

I would like to reiterate that negotiations with Israel have been and will remain to be under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the PLO, which I head. The outcome of these negotiations will be presented to the Palestinian National Council (PNC) the highest Palestinian national body, or to a national public referendum.

What we have achieved in this regard should suffice to lift the unjust siege imposed on our people, which has inflicted extensive damage on our society, its livelihood, and the means of its growth and development.

Madame President,

I come to you bearing the wounds of a people that bleed everyday. A people that seek a normal life, where our children go safely to school, where children are born to live, and not die.

Where youth can find honorable work that provides them with a dignified path to a secure future, so that they can be partners in formulating their narrative, not victims to the cruelty of History. Where women give birth to their babies in hospitals, not on the checkpoints of the occupation. Where families gather in the evenings to dream of a new day, devoid of killing, imprisonment, or arrest.

I simply want tomorrow to be better than today. I want my homeland Palestine to be a homeland not a prison, independent and sovereign like all other peoples of this world. I want for Jerusalem to be the meeting point for the dialogue of all prophets. To be the capital of two neighbor states that live in peace and equality.

From this venerated platform, thirty-two years ago, the late President Yasser Arafat issued his famous resounding call: "do not let the olive branch fall from my hand".

And here I am repeating this same call: do not let the olive branch fall from my hand, do not let the olive branch fall from my hand. - Thank You, Madame President



**STATEMENT BY SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE SAUD AL-FAISAL
(DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR FAWZI SHOBOKSHI ON HIS BEHALF),
61ST UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 22 SEPTEMBER 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

[...] Madam President:

The Middle East is in the midst of a very dangerous phase, with the emergence of new crises, the worsening of old crises, and their overlap. The urgent situations which we are currently facing include the continued Israeli occupation of Arab lands in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon; the volatile situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, which resulted this summer in a brutal and destructive Israeli attack and invasion of Lebanon; the challenges posed by continued instability and sectarian violence in Iraq; and the as-yet unresolved issue of Iran's nuclear program.

The accumulation of crises and tensions in the region can only encourage an environment in which extremism and terrorism will thrive, with all the dangerous and undesired consequences which this holds. It is imperative therefore that we exert all our efforts to achieve comprehensive and fair solutions to these crises, in accordance with the principles of international law and the letter of international resolutions, rejecting any form of bias or double standards. We certainly cannot afford a continued slackening of international efforts or a dangerous complacency with stopgap crisis management.

The key to resolving these multiple crises will be to invigorate the peace process and to achieve a just and durable settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This conflict is the most enduring international conflict today, and its continuation affects negatively the chances of concluding effective solutions to other crises. The ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestine is in contravention to international law, it constitutes a grave violation of the principle of refraining from forcible seizure of other nations' territories, and it represents an affront to the decisions reached by this very body. It most certainly lies at the core of the Middle Eastern problem.

The international community should no longer tolerate any procrastination or repeated failures in resolving this situation. The international community, and especially its major powers, must set aside their divisions and face up to the vital task of rapidly reaching a peaceful, just and lasting solution, in accordance with the principles of international legitimacy.

Resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict must be placed into its appropriate context by reconciling the rights of the Palestinian and the Israeli people and establishing two neighboring states enjoying security as a natural outcome of peace. It is peace that assures security, and not the other way around. The basis for a solution are clear to all of us, and it was expressed by the president of the United States in his two-state vision, which is in harmony with previous UN resolutions and with the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted unanimously by 22 Arab states. What is missing and urgently needed today is to link this vision with a clear agenda bound to a specific time frame.

Regrettably, the problem was portrayed as inextricably complicated and not amenable to customary solutions. Using security considerations as a pretext, exceptional provisions allowed one of the parties involved in the conflict to specify unilaterally the basis and conditions for negotiations, to choose his negotiating partner, to violate previously concluded agreements, and to impose unilateral measures. Our purpose here is not to enter into futile debates, but it is important to recognize that the peace process has suffered greatly from these exceptions that create double standards and imbalanced obligations.

Reviving the peace process requires serious international cooperation. Recent events have again proven that military solutions can achieve nothing but the undermining of the interests and security of all parties; it is therefore essential that we learn the lessons of our previous failures in the pursuit of peace. These failures resulted from an exaggerated emphasis on procedural and provisional issues. The establishment of interim security arrangements proved complicated and exhausting, while the procedures for building mutual trust practically enabled enemies of peace to undermine the peace process in its entirety. What is required from us today is a fundamental change in our approach towards achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the area. It is absolutely essential that we go to the root of the conflict and the heart of the problem, by establishing an effective mechanism to ensure immediate peaceful negotiations that will address all final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, refugees and mutual security arrangements. The required breakthrough can only be achieved through a historic and comprehensive deal.

A clear outline of the solution has been apparent ever since the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 181 in 1947. This resolution set out the partition of Palestine, which was then under British mandate, into an Arab and an Israeli state. It also proposed clearly defined borders for these two states.

Since then, the Security Council and the General Assembly have issued hundreds of resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, which emphasized the principle of refraining from forcible seizure of other nations' lands, and called on Israel to withdraw from all territories occupied in 1967. It also reiterated the need to find a just solution to the issue of the Palestinian refugees. Thirty-nine years after the adoption of this resolution, Palestinians are still deprived of their inherent rights of self determination and the entitlement to live in an independent state with Arab Jerusalem as its capital. [...]



**FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF FOREIGN
MINISTERS OF MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC
CONFERENCE, UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK, 25 SEPTEMBER 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

REGIONAL ISSUES

[...] PALESTINE AND AL-QUDS AL-SHARIF

13. The Meeting reaffirmed the centrality of the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif for the whole Islamic Ummah. It affirmed the Arab nature of East Jerusalem and the need to defend the sanctity of Islamic and Christian holy places. It reiterated its condemnation of the attempts by Israel, the occupying Power, to change the status, demographic composition and the character of East Jerusalem, in particular by its illegal colonization practices, including its settlement activities and construction of the Wall in and around the City.
14. The Meeting condemned the ongoing and intensifying Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people by which Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to commit grave human rights violations and war crimes, including the killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians by use of disproportionate and indiscriminate force as well as the continued practice of extrajudicial executions, the vast destruction of properties, infrastructure and agricultural lands, and the detention and imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians, including women and children. It demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately cease all such violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law.
15. The Meeting strongly condemned Israel's continuation and escalation of its military aggression and acts of State terror against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, which have resulted in the killing and injury of hundreds of civilians, including women and children, and the deliberate and wanton destruction of Palestinian property and vital infrastructure. It stressed that such unlawful actions by the occupying Power constitute grave breaches of international law, i.e. war crimes, for which the perpetrators must be held accountable and brought to justice. It called for the immediate cessation of Israel's military aggression and collective punishment against the Palestinian people and called for Israel's scru-

- pulous compliance with all of its legal obligations under international law, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention. It also called for the withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from within the Gaza Strip, for Israel to fulfill its responsibility to repair all damages caused to the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, and for the immediate release of all Palestinian officials detained by Israel, the occupying Power, since 28 June 2006.
16. The Meeting condemned Israel's continued imposition of collective punishment upon the Palestinian people, including in particular the severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods via closures and hundreds of checkpoints, some of which have been transformed into structures similar to permanent international border crossings, including at Qalandiya and Bethlehem, in the middle of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, away from the 1967 border (Green Line). It stressed that such illegal Israeli practices are in effect strangling the Palestinian economy and society, are physically severing the northern, central and southern parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory into separate and isolated areas, and are undermining its territorial integrity and contiguity.
 17. The Meeting reiterated its deep concern at the intensifying hardships being faced by the Palestinian people during the current period following the 25 January 2006 elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council and the increasing financial and political isolation being imposed on the Palestinian Authority by some members of the international community in the aftermath of the elections. It called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from withholding tax revenue transfers due to the Palestinian Authority, which is deepening the financial crisis of the Authority. The Meeting rejected the punishment of the Palestinian people for the democratic election of their representatives, and instead reaffirmed the necessity of upholding international law, international humanitarian law, including in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter with regard to the question of Palestine under all circumstances.
 18. The Meeting affirmed its full support and backing for the Palestinian people in strengthening their national unity and unifying their internal front; and expressed its support for the Palestinian national dialogue efforts and for its steadfastness in the face of the illegal Israeli policies and practices. It welcomed the adoption in June 2006 of the Palestinian National Conciliation Document.
 19. The Meeting reiterated its grave concern and strong condemnation regarding Israel's continuing intensive campaign of settler colonialism, including vast land confiscations and the construction and expansion of illegal settlements, and condemned Israel's intentions to proceed with the dangerous and illegal E-1 plan in and around Occupied East Jerusalem as well as its declared plans to illegally annex the Jordan Valley. Furthermore, the Meeting stressed the dangers of the Israeli Government's continuing unilateral measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and expressed their rejection of its declared intentions to proceed with further unlawful unilateral plans in the West Bank. It reaffirmed that such plans are unlawful, unacceptable and cannot alter the terms of reference of the peace process nor negate the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.
 20. The Meeting reiterated its condemnation of Israel's continuing construction of the Wall throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, in flagrant violation of international law and disregard for the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004. It expressed its deep concern at the physical, economic and social devastation being caused by the Wall, which is dissecting the Territory into several walled and isolated cantons and severing Occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this regard, it further reiterated that, if completed, the Wall, along with Israel's illegal settlement campaign and fortification of illegal checkpoints, will render the two-State solution impossible to achieve. It therefore stressed the urgency and obligation of respect for and compliance with both the Advisory Opinion and resolution ES-10/15 by Israel, the occupying power, by Member States and by the United Nations. It also expressed its disappointment at the lack of progress made by the UN Secretariat in establishing the register of damages caused by the Wall, as called for in resolution ES-10/15, and called upon the UN Secretary-General to exert all necessary efforts to expedite this matter. It also called on the Security Council to undertake its responsibilities by adopting a clear resolution and undertaking necessary measures in this regard. The Meeting called upon Member States to undertake measures, including by means of legislation collectively, regionally and individually, to prevent any products of the illegal Israeli settlements from entering their markets consistent with the obligations under international treaties, to decline entry to Israeli settlers and to impose sanctions

against companies and entities involved in the construction of the wall and other illegal action in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

21. The Meeting called for the urgent intensification of efforts by the Quartet and the entire international community, in particular the Security Council, to address the current political and humanitarian crisis, leading to the revival of the peace process and the resumption of negotiations between the two sides and the full and honest implementation of the Road Map towards ending the occupation of the Palestinian Territory that was occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, and thus realizing the two-State solution. It also called on the Quartet to engage the Security Council, considering the Council's Charter authority and responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It also emphasized the importance of the decisions of the recent Arab Summit in Khartoum, the Sudan, especially the call for reinvigoration of the Arab Peace Initiative adopted in Beirut, Lebanon, on 28 March 2002.
22. The Meeting reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations, including the General Assembly and the Security Council, towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects on the basis of international law, including a just resolution to the plight of the refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194(III) of 11 December 1948. It called upon the United Nations to increase its efforts towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace settlement, based on the two-State solution, and on relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) as well as agreed principles, which call for Israel's complete withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and all other occupied Arab territories and the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in their independent State of Palestine, on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.
23. The Meeting recalled General Assembly resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004, on the "Status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", and stressed the need for follow-up in ensuring that Israeli credentials to the United Nations do not cover the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

The Meeting outlined the fundamental role of Al-Quds Committee, chaired by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, and its tireless efforts to revive the peace process in order to reach a comprehensive, lasting and just peace in the Middle East, contributing to stand up for the legitimacy of the Palestinian's people cause, to preserve the Holy Lands of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its particular spiritual dimension. The Meeting reiterated the need to grant the necessary support to the "Bayt Mal A-Quds Al-Sharif" Agency for the implementation of its program and plan of action in the fields of urbanism, education and health, taking into account the humanitarian conditions, which prevail inside the Palestinian Territories.

26. The Meeting condemned Israel, the occupying Power, for the excavation works around and beneath the blessed Al -Aqsa Mosque and for willfully destroying cultural and heritage sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, Nablus and Al-Khaleel (Hebron), and commended the initiative of the Director General of UNESCO concerning the preservation of the historical heritage of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. In this regard, it resolved to coordinate between the OIC General Secretariat and UNESCO, and invited the Member States to support this initiative and help implement it.
27. The Meeting strongly condemned the continuous threats against Islamic and Christian holy places, particularly the threats to storm and damage the blessed Al- Aqsa Mosque, and held Israel, the occupying Power, fully responsible for the consequences of these aggressions, particularly as they happen under the eyes and protection of Israeli occupation forces. It also condemned acts of terrorism committed by illegal Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and peace activists coming from all parts of the world to show solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The Meeting took note of and called for immediate implementation of resolution S-1/Res.1 adopted by the First Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 6 July 2006 in which it demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, end the military operation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, abide scrupulously by the provisions of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and refrain from imposing collective punishment on Palestinian civilians", and also urged Israel to "immediately release the arrested Palestinian Ministers, members of the Palestinian legislative Council and others, as well as all others arrested Palestinian civilians. The Meeting requested the OIC Group in Geneva to ensure the implementation of resolution S-1/Res.1, in par-

particular the urgent dispatch of an urgent fact-finding mission headed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

29. The Meeting expressed its full support for the decision taken by the governments of Costa Rica and El Salvador to move their embassies from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. It reaffirmed all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions relating to Jerusalem conforming that it is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian Territory, and that all Israeli measures aimed at altering the legal, geographic and demographic character and status of Jerusalem are null and void.



JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, ADDRESS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, BRUSSELS, 4 OCTOBER 2006 [EXCERPTS]

Israeli-Palestinian question

There have been dramatic developments over the past few days. The situation in Gaza and in the West Bank is explosive. Violent armed clashes erupted between Fatah and Hamas last Sunday.

Several people have been killed. One Hamas leader was killed today by Palestinians in the West Bank. Efforts to calm the situation are continuing, by various parties - including parties in the region and us - to consolidate the calm. The potential for further deterioration of the situation still exists in spite of the efforts exerted.

Qatar yesterday proposed a six-point plan aimed at reducing the tension. It proposes a new government with a different prime minister. This will probably not fly but it is a good attempt from an active Arab country.

President Abbas is expected to take decisive decisions to overcome the current crisis. There has been no agreement so far between him and Hamas on the formation of a unity government. But there is serious talk of a unity government formed of qualified nationals. If this is not possible, there is the possibility that President Abbas will call early elections. I think this would complicate things.

The Quartet met the week before last in New York and it issued a good, clear statement, welcomed by the parties, using European language, welcoming the Palestinian efforts to form a government of national unity. Let us hope that, from now on, the Quartet can play a more active role. We must give momentum to the efforts to make Israel-Palestine conflict the centre of gravity because if this is not solved the rest of the conflicts in the Middle East cannot be solved.

I intend to go myself to the Middle East soon, after my two trips to Lebanon during the summer conflict.

The EU has been helping Palestine both politically and economically. Without external political and economic support, the situation in the Palestinian Territories may deteriorate beyond recovery.

So far this year the EU's support for the Palestinians already exceeds the total amount for 2005 despite Hamas' ascent to power. But we should do more. We are determined to do more.

The Rafah crossing point, on the border between Palestine and Egypt, has been closed for most of the time since the abduction of the Israeli soldier. We have tried very hard to have it open at least for a few hours in the day. We are also looking at the possibility of setting up a similar operation to the EUBAM Rafah mission on the border between Palestine and Israel.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT
THE AMERICAN TASK FORCE ON PALESTINE INAUGURAL GALA, "HELPING
PALESTINIANS BUILD A BETTER FUTURE", WASHINGTON, DC, 11 OCTOBER 2006**

Thank you very much. Thank you. I would first like to thank Dr. Ziad Asali for that wonderful introduction. But more importantly, I would like to thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to this very important cause, and for your friendship and counsel over my time as Secretary of State. Thank you very much for all that you do.

Now, before I go any further, let me wish you all Ramadan Karim to those of you here tonight, and to the millions of Muslims in America and across the world, who are now celebrating the holy month of Ramadan.

I am honored that Senators Carl Levin and John Sununu are here joining us tonight, along with many members of the diplomatic corps. In particular, I would like to thank and welcome Saudi Ambassador Prince Turki al-Faisal for being here. And I know that you will make remarks later. Thank you very much.

Finally, let me congratulate the distinguished Palestinian-Americans whom we are honoring tonight: Governor John Sununu, a good and longtime friend; Mr. Jesse Aweida, and Professor Mujid Kazini. These three individuals remind us of the great contribution that Palestinian-Americans are making to our nation – adding not just to our country's diversity, but to its character. I applaud the American Task Force on Palestine for highlighting the success of Palestinian-Americans, and for your continued support of all who work for peace in the Middle East.

Now, as I imagine most of you know, I traveled last week to the region. I consulted widely with our many friends and allies. And I am pleased to have this opportunity to share with you my sense of where we stand in the Middle East, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli issue.

These are, without a doubt, difficult and challenging times. And I know that the past few months have been especially trying. In many places across the region – from Lebanon and Iraq, to the Palestinian territories and Israel – the images of violence, the stories of suffering, the deaths of innocent people are hard for all of us to bear. They're hard for me and I know that they are for you.

But let me also say that it is in times of testing that courage and perseverance are needed most by the people of the Middle East who deserve our support. It is my belief, and that of President Bush, that when we look at the recent actions of radicals in Hamas and Hezbollah, or at the violence of terrorists and militias in Iraq, or at the policies of governments like Syria or Iran, we are witnessing a campaign of extremism – not always commonly planned, but sharing a common purpose: to roll back the promise of a hopeful Middle East, where security, and freedom, and opportunity can expand.

If peace and dignity are to prevail in the region, then it is absolutely essential for leaders to be able to show, for moderate leaders to show, that their ideas, and their principles, and their vision for the future can offer a better alternative than violence and terrorism. That is why President Bush asked me to travel last week to the Middle East – to confer with moderate voices, with moderate Arab governments and with moderate leaders, to build a support for those people who are trying and who need our help more than ever now, leaders like Prime Minister Siniora in Lebanon, Prime Minister Maliki in Iraq, and most especially, of course, President Abbas in the Palestinian territories, from whom we have just heard.

Last month, in his speech to the UN General Assembly, President Bush reiterated his deep conviction that the Palestinian people deserve a better life – a life that is rooted in liberty and democracy, uncompromised by violence and terrorism, unburdened by corruption and misrule, and forever free of the daily humiliation of occupation. It is this belief that led President Bush, in June of 2002, to become the first American president to make it a matter of policy that the creation of a Palestinian state, with territorial integrity, with viability, living side by side with Israel, in peace and security, would indeed strengthen peace and security, not just in the region but the peace and security of us all.

At that time, President Bush pledged that, as Palestinians stepped forward to build a peaceful, responsible state, they would find no greater partner in this endeavor than the United States. Today, we are endeavoring to keep our promise.

First, we want to help the Palestinians to lay the political foundations of a successful state. We supported the free and fair election in January 2005, in which millions of Palestinians elected Mahmoud Abbas as their president. In the days and months that have followed, we have worked to assist his government in the long and difficult process of building effective democratic institutions. When it was time for parliamentary elections earlier this year, we again supported the Palestinians' right to choose their own leaders, and as you know, a plurality of voters cast their votes for Hamas.

At the time of the election, there were those who criticized our support for the election. And many still do. But I would ask everyone, "Is there a better way than to allow people to express their views, to have a role in choosing those who will govern them? And now look at how things are changing. For decades, Hamas dwelled in the shadows, able to hijack the future of all Palestinians at will, without ever having to answer for its actions. Today, however, the Palestinian people and the international community can hold Hamas accountable. And Hamas now faces a hard choice that it has always sought to avoid: Either you are a peaceful political party, or a violent terrorist group – but you cannot be both.

All the members of the Quartet – the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, and Russia – are holding firm in our conviction that a Palestinian partner for peace needs to accept three principles: the disavowal of terror and violence, the recognition of Israel's right to exist, and the acceptance of all previous agreements between the parties, including the Roadmap, which is the only internationally agreed-upon framework to create a Palestinian state. At the same time, we fully support President Abbas, and the growing number of his fellow citizens, who are urging Hamas to put the interests of the Palestinian people ahead of their own rejectionist agenda.

Now, we in the international community recognize that the past several months have been really hard for the Palestinian people. We know that living conditions have deteriorated, and that many are in need of assistance.

So we are working to ensure that the Palestinian people receive the food, and the medicine, and the humanitarian relief that they so desperately need. That is why the United States recently increased our direct assistance to the Palestinians to \$468 million a year, with much of that going to meet basic needs. We've also worked with our foreign partners to create a temporary mechanism to channel international donor assistance directly to the Palestinian people. We and our European allies are now expanding this mechanism into a new international assistance program to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable Palestinians.

Second, we want to help the Palestinian people to lay the economic foundations of a successful state. The Palestinians are some of the most talented, best educated, and hardest working people in the Middle East. What they need more than anything are opportunities to prosper. And last November, I personally worked with parties to create an opportunity – an Agreement on Movement and Access, to help the Palestinians travel more freely and transport their goods to market. It is important that we continue to work so that Palestinians and Israelis can implement this agreement.

Finally, we want to help the Palestinians establish the environment of security and the rule of law that a successful state requires. In his speech at the United Nations last month, President Bush specifically charged me with helping the Palestinians on this front, and that was one of the key purposes of my recent visit. Together with Lt. General Keith Dayton, who is leading our efforts to help the Palestinians reform their security services, I spoke with President Abbas about how we can help him stem the violence in the West Bank and Gaza. And we are working on a new initiative, along with our allies such as Egypt, and Jordan, and the European Union.

I realize that the continuing problems of security are also a great challenge for many Palestinian-Americans living in Gaza and the West Bank – and for so many others, including many of you, who

travel there often, who work for greater tolerance and understanding, and who invest your time, and your knowledge, and indeed your capital in the Palestinian territories. People like you have a vital role to play in the Middle East, and I will continue to do everything in my power to support your good work, and to ensure that all American travelers receive fair and equal treatment.

You see, ladies and gentlemen, our government cannot by itself meet the historic challenge that we now face in the Middle East. To empower moderate men and women in the Palestinian territories and across the region, to help them build lives of peace and dignity, we in government need the full support of private partners: our businesses, our universities, our non-governmental organizations, and our fellow citizens like you.

Recently, President Bush formed a partnership with leaders of four major American companies to support the government and people of Lebanon. A presidential delegation traveled to Beirut last month. And together, the State Department and America's business community are now raising millions of dollars in new assistance and investment, which will help the Lebanese people rebuild their country and revitalize their economy.

This partnership can, and should, become a model for efforts to support the Palestinian people and the government of President Abbas. So let us mobilize the full energy of the Palestinian-American community. Let us find new and more determined ways to realize our shared vision of two states, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security. And let us focus our efforts to strengthen and support moderate men and women throughout the region, who simply long for peace, and development, and dignity.

I know that sometimes a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with Israel must seem like a very distant dream. But I know too, as a student of international history, that there are so many things that once seemed impossible that, after they happened, simply seemed inevitable. I've read over the last summer the biographies of America's Founding Fathers. By all rights, America, the United States of America, should never have come into being. We should never have survived our civil war. I should never have grown up in segregated Birmingham, Alabama to become the Secretary of State of the United States of America.

And yet, time and time again, whether in Europe or in Asia or even in parts of Africa, states that no one thought would come into being, and certainly not peacefully and democratically, did. And then looking back on them, we wonder why did anyone ever doubt that it was possible.

I know the commitment of the Palestinian people to a better future. I know firsthand the commitment of President Abbas and moderate Palestinians to that future. And I know the commitment of the people in this room and of the American Task Force on Palestine that one day indeed there will be a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with Israel.

I can only tell you that I, too, have a personal commitment to that goal because I believe that there could be no greater legacy for America than to help to bring into being a Palestinian state for a people who have suffered too long, who have been humiliated too long, who have not reached their potential for too long, and who have so much to give to the international community and to all of us. I promise you my personal commitment to that goal. - Thank you very much.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST,
EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING, LUXEMBOURG, 16-17 OCTOBER 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

Middle East Peace Process

The Council welcomed the statement by the Quartet at its meeting in New York on 20 September and, in particular, the Quartet's intention to reinforce its activity, including with the parties and regional

partners. The Council recalled the urgent need to make progress towards a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the Roadmap, and with a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at its core. It welcomed the consensus within the international community to that effect. The Council underlined that the EU would continue actively its efforts to this end.

The Council expressed its support to President Abbas and called on the Palestinians to join his efforts towards national unity and the formation of a government with a platform reflecting the Quartet principles and allowing for early engagement. Such a government would also be a key factor for allowing the EU to pursue its goal of strengthening the capacity of Palestinian institutions. The Council called on all Palestinian factions to end their internal strife.

The Council underlined the importance of an early resumption of dialogue between the two parties with a view to re-launching negotiations on the basis of the Roadmap. The Council recalled the utmost importance of the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access, particularly the permanent opening of the Rafah, Karni and other crossings. The Council reiterated its call for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier. It repeated its call for the immediate release of Palestinian Ministers and legislators in Israeli custody. It called for an end to violence and for restraint on both sides.

The Council welcomed the extension of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) for a further three months and the expansion of this mechanism to an even greater number of vulnerable people. It encouraged other donors to make full use of the mechanism. The Council reiterated its call for an immediate resumption of transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues by Israel. The Council further called on Israel to consider resumption of such transfers via the TIM to alleviate the deteriorating economic and humanitarian conditions in Gaza and the West Bank.

Lebanon

The Council renewed its commitment to support the full implementation of UNSCR 1701. It welcomed the overall deployment in Southern Lebanon of the Lebanese Armed Forces, supported by UNIFIL. It noted the almost complete withdrawal of Israeli troops and called on Israel to withdraw also from the Lebanese part of the town of Ghajar in co-ordination with UNIFIL. The Council stressed that Lebanon's sovereignty over its land, sea and airspace must be respected. The Council called for the immediate release of the two abducted Israeli soldiers.

The Council reiterated the EU's commitment to support the legitimate and democratically elected Lebanese government. The EU will continue to assist the Lebanese government in meeting its humanitarian and environmental needs and in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process. The EU will support the Lebanese government in further extending its authority throughout Lebanese territory, and in taking forward political, security, economic and social reforms. The Council recalled that there will be no weapons without the consent of the government of Lebanon. The Council called on all sides to observe the requirement of authorisation by the Lebanese government of sales and supply of arms. The Council called on all parties and neighbours to support this process.

* * *

The Council reaffirmed its full support for the UN International Investigation Commission into the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and other terrorist attacks as mandated by UNSCR 1595, 1644 and 1686. It commended the professional work made by Mr. Brammertz and his team under difficult circumstances, and welcomed the 5th report by UNIIC. It expressed its confidence that progress will be achieved in bringing the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. It underlined the importance of the establishment of tribunal of an international character, in conformity with UNSCR 1664.



**EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY, STATEMENT ON DEATHS OF
CIVILIANS IN ISRAELI OPERATION IN GAZA, 8 NOVEMBER 2006**

The Presidency is appalled at the continuing killing of civilians due to the ongoing Israeli operation in Gaza. The Presidency calls on Israel to end its military action in Gaza and on the Palestinians to stop firing rockets onto the Israeli side. The spiral of violence will only have serious consequences for the security and political situation in the region.

The Presidency appeals for calm and restraint on both sides. The Presidency also urges the Palestinians to continue their efforts to form a government of national unity.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, STATEMENT ON
THE US VETO OF A UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON ISRAEL,
WASHINGTON, DC, 11 NOVEMBER 2006**

On November 8, Israeli artillery shells were fired into a residential area of Beit Hanoun, killing 17 civilians. The injuries and loss of life, and especially the deaths of a number of young children, were tragic. That day, President Bush conveyed deepest condolences on behalf of the United States. The President called on all parties to act with care so as to avoid any harm to innocent civilians.

The Israeli government has apologized for the incident and stated that it did not intend to fire on Beit Hanoun. It has promised a thorough investigation. The United States calls on Israel to report its findings as soon as possible and to take appropriate steps to avoid a repetition of these events.

Today, the United States was compelled to vote against a resolution in the United Nations Security Council because the resolution would have used the tragic incident in Beit Hanoun to advance a one-sided political agenda. We do not believe the resolution was designed to contribute to the cause of peace. Among other things, the resolution included an unsubstantiated determination that Israel had violated international law. The resolution included inflammatory and unnecessary language that would aggravate the situation in Gaza. The resolution, moreover, failed to include any reference to terrorism or to condemn Hamas for its threats to broaden the attacks against Israel and the United States.

The United States calls on all sides to undertake their obligations, as spelled out in the Roadmap, in order to realize the vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2761ST GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 13 NOVEMBER 2006**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

The Council expressed its deep concern at the escalating violence in Gaza and in the West Bank.

The Council strongly deplores the Israeli military action in Gaza resulting in a growing number of civilian casualties, including women and children, and deplores the unacceptable military operation in Beit Hanoun on 8 November 2006. While recognising Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, the Council urged Israel to exercise utmost restraint and underlined that action should not be disproportionate or in contradiction to international humanitarian law. The Council called on Israel to cease its military operations that endanger the Palestinian civilian population in the Palestinian Territory. The Council also strongly deplores the firing of rockets on Israeli territory and called on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to such acts. The deterioration of the situation will only aggravate the already grave circumstances in the region where a return to a comprehensive peace process with a clear political perspective is urgently needed. To achieve this, an immediate cessation of violence is needed.

The Council reiterated its call for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier and commended efforts including by partners in the region to that effect. It repeated its call for immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators detained in Israel.

The Council urged the Palestinians to work for national unity and to form a government with a platform reflecting the Quartet principles and allowing for early engagement. Such a government of national unity would also be a partner for the international community to support the re-launching of the peace process.

The Council reiterated the EU's intention to actively contribute to the work within the Quartet to get the Middle East Peace Process urgently back on track in order to make progress towards a comprehensive settlement on the basis of the Roadmap, relevant UNSC resolutions and the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh in 2005. This should be done in close cooperation with Arab partners.

The Council reiterated the necessity of a political perspective and reinvigorating the peace process through re-launching negotiations. To support the objective of a future independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state based on the rule of law, the Council underlined the importance of preserving and strengthening the capacity of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority. To that end, the Council underlined the work already undertaken by the EU and continued in the current circumstances to help building Palestinian institutions and expressed its readiness to provide enhanced support to a Palestinian Government that the EU can engage with. Further efforts in this respect will take into account useful experiences of the EU missions in this area, EU BAM Rafah and EU POL COPPS as well as the results of technical assistance provided to Palestinian institutions.

The Council emphasised the importance of the implementation of the Agreement of Movement and Access of November 2005. It called on Israel to also respect previous agreements and to fulfil its obligations under them. It insisted on the particular importance of regular operations at Gaza crossings, notably Rafah and called on Israel to do its utmost to ensure that the crossings be opened and remain open. The Council decided to extend the EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point for a further six months.

The Council called on Israel to desist from any action that threatens the viability of an agreed two-State solution. Of particular concern are settlement activities in and around East Jerusalem as well as in the Jordan Valley. The European Union will not recognise any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties.

The Council remains deeply concerned at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank, as also highlighted in recent reports by UN agencies. The Council recalled its commitment to help the Palestinian people and noted that the EU's combined assistance in 2006 exceeds EUR 650 million. The Council reiterated its call on Israel for the immediate resumption of transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. The Council encouraged donors and others to make full use of the Temporary International Mechanism.



**EUROPEAN UNION, STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN GAZA,
UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 3RD SPECIAL SESSION, 15 NOVEMBER 2006**

[The statement, deploring Israeli military incursions in the OPT, incl. a recent one in Northern Gaza and the assault on Beit Hanoun, was delivered by Ambassador Vesa Himanen.]

Mr. President,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Let me make clear from the outset that the European Union is deeply concerned about the escalating violence in the Middle East. The EU continues also to be deeply concerned about the human rights and the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories.

The EU strongly deplores the Israeli military action in Gaza resulting in a growing number of civilian casualties, including women and children, and deplores the unacceptable military operation in Beit Hanoun on 8 November 2006. We are shocked by the large number of civilian deaths and injuries caused by the shelling of Beit Hanoun. We deeply regret the growing number of civilian casualties, many of them children, as well as the destruction of houses and other civilian infrastructure.

While recognising Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, the EU urges Israel to exercise utmost restraint and underline that action should not be disproportionate or in contradiction to international humanitarian law. We call on Israel to cease its military operations that endanger the Palestinian civilian population in the Palestinian Territory. It is imperative that the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people be urgently alleviated.

The EU also strongly deplores the firing of rockets on Israeli territory. We call on the Palestinian leadership to bring an end to such acts. The deterioration of the situation will only aggravate the already grave circumstances in the region where a return to a comprehensive peace process with a clear political perspective is urgently needed. To achieve this, an immediate cessation of violence is needed. The EU reiterates its call for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier. In addition we repeat our call for immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators detained in Israel. The EU reiterates its intention to actively contribute to the work to get the Middle East Peace Process urgently back on track within the Quartet. The aim of the EU contribution is to make progress towards a comprehensive settlement on the basis of the Roadmap, relevant UNSC resolutions and the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh in 2005. This should be done in close cooperation with Arab partners.

The EU emphasises the importance of the implementation of the Agreement of Movement and Access of November 2005. We call on Israel to respect previous agreements and to fulfil its obligations under them. Regular operations at Gaza crossings, notably Rafah are of particular importance in this respect. We call on Israel to do its utmost to ensure that the crossings be opened and remain open.

I would also like to remind us that according to our constituent resolution the Council shall be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. The EU is willing to cooperate with all Council members in order to adequately address all Human rights situations of concern with a consultative and constructive approach with an aim to arrive at a consensus when possible.

Finally I would like to reiterate the EU's commitment to help the Palestinian people. Our combined assistance in 2006 exceeds 650 million euros. We also call on Israel for the immediate resumption of transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. The commanding concern in the EU's approach on the situation in the Occupied Territories is that of peace. Without peace there is no hope. This hope is created by the acts of both parties and that is the reason the EU has repeatedly reminded the parties concerned of their obligations urging them to take action while expressing the readiness to support them.

Thank You Mr. President



**SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE,
EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU, SPEECH BEFORE THE EXTRAORDINARY EXPANDED
MEETING OF THE OIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL
ON THE ISRAELI AGGRESSION AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE,
JEDDAH, 18 NOVEMBER 2006**

Bismillahi Arrahmani Arrahim,

In the Name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

Your Excellencies the Ministers, Honorable Heads of Delegations,

Assalamu Alaikum Warhmattullah Wabarakatuh, May Allah's Peace and Grace Be Upon You,

I would like to welcome all of you and express my deep appreciation and sincere thanks to you for accepting the invitation to participate in this meeting, as we meet today upon the request of the President of the State of Palestine, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, in the aftermath of the heinous massacre which caused the killing of scores of helpless and defenseless children and women in Beit Hanoun within an Israeli assault on the northern Gaza Strip that has been going on over the past several months and has been systematically destroying the Palestinian infrastructure and facilities; bulldozing trees and farmland; and demolishing houses and factories.

Since the onset of this recent Israeli military campaign on the Gaza Strip, we condemned this aggression and made contacts with several parties in order to compel Israel to put an end to its campaign. I also directed the Permanent Observers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in New York and Geneva to take urgent action to coordinate meetings of the Islamic Group. A meeting was consequently held at the level of Ambassadors of the OIC Member States in New York, which concluded its proceedings with the adoption of a communiqué expressing the Islamic Group's condemnation of the massacre perpetrated by Israel in Beit Hanoun. The Islamic Group also called on the United Nations Security Council to convene an emergency session in order to consider the massacre. Strenuous efforts were deployed to back up a draft resolution submitted by the State of Qatar, which was blocked because of the United States' use of the veto.

Consequently, the Islamic Group called for a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. The meeting, which was held yesterday, condemned Israel for perpetrating the Massacre of Beit Hanun and decided to dispatch a fact-finding mission to investigate the massacre. We welcome this resolution which was adopted by a large majority and look forward to the implementation of its provisions as soon as possible. I call upon the Islamic Group to follow up on the matter.

In this regard, I must put on record my satisfaction with, and appreciation of the role played by the Islamic Group in Geneva in working hard and calling for the convening of a special session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Thankfully, this work culminated in the success of the group with the adoption by the Human Rights Council of a resolution condemning Israel; providing for the dispatch of a high-level international fact-finding mission to Palestine in order to investigate the Israeli crimes and violations against Palestinian civilians; and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. The success that has been won by the Islamic Group on this issue not only shows emphatically that the Organization of the Islamic Conference can be an influential and active force in international forums but also represents an achievement which will encourage us to redouble our endeavors in order to consolidate the influence of our Organization in the service of the causes of the Muslim Ummah.

The sheer magnitude of the support received by the Palestinian cause recently in Geneva and New York reflects a development that we regard as a positive indication of the significant shift in the position of many countries and that points also to the growing international outrage and exasperation at Israel's practices and policies and its refusal to comply with international law. We must take advantage of this shift in order to put an end to Israel acting as a state above the law.

Your Excellencies the Ministers, Honorable Heads of Delegations,

The Palestinian situation on the ground has become extremely alarming, particularly in the aftermath of the escalation of the Israeli aggression on the Palestinian people, who are subjected, on a daily basis, to relentless attacks, killings, raids and incursions; the destruction of their homes and infrastructures; the closing of passages and corridors; collective punishment; the continued building of the racist separation barrier; and the growingly frenzied settlement drives in the occupied territories, particularly in Al-Quds and its surroundings.

The Blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and other holy shrines are also suffering daily Israeli onslaughts and desecration. Palestinian economic conditions have deteriorated to an unbearable point, which threatens to provoke a humanitarian disaster as a result of the persistent economic and financial blockade imposed on the Palestinian people since the legislative elections early in 2006.

We have demanded the lifting of the unjust embargo imposed on the Palestinian people, and considered it to be a punishment to the Palestinians for their democratic choices leading to their starvation and preventing them from the most elementary requirements of life. Today, I am appealing to the Member States and the Muslim peoples to break the embargo and take practical measures to deliver assistance to the Palestinian people.

Our contacts have continued with the Palestinian leadership to pursue the national dialogue. We have encouraged all parties to pursue the calm and constructive dialogue which has led to the signing of the National Reconciliation Document, and we hope that this dialogue will continue until it fulfils its desired objective of strengthening the Palestinian national unity, and that a national unity government will be formed in such a manner as to help preserve the national Palestinian achievements and to enable the Palestinian people to move ahead toward the achievement of their established national rights. On this occasion, I reiterate my appeal to my Palestinian brothers to unify their rank and to practice the highest degrees of wisdom and responsibility required by the current delicate stage of the Palestinian cause.

Excellencies the Ministers, Honorable Heads of Delegations,

The lack of serious endeavors to find a just solution to the Palestinian question as the nucleus of the dispute in the Middle East has started to fuel the various conflicts that have started to jeopardize the security of the region. Worse still, their dangers expand to include international security and peace. Now more than anytime before, the international community must be aware that its interests and those of its peoples are strengthened by the establishment of peace in the Middle East. Recently, indicators have shown that numerous international parties have become convinced of the necessity of stabilizing the region and solving its problems, starting with the Palestinian question. This would create a climate which necessitates action for the launching of a serious and purposeful peace process leading to a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East dispute and ending the Israeli occupation of all territories occupied since 1967.

In this connection, we renew our call for an international conference for comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy, the principle of land for peace and the Arab peace initiative. The peace conference we call for must develop a comprehensive conception for an integrated solution to the Middle East problems, including occupation, economic development and other problems that may constitute a threat to peace and security in the region. I reiterate the OIC's readiness to play an active role in this regard, particularly as the Ten-Year Programme of Action adopted by the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference in Makkah has called for an effective role of the OIC in the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

The time is ripe for the Palestinian people, like all other peoples of the world, to enjoy independence and freedom. The current situation of the Palestinian question is so serious and delicate that it compels the Islamic world to join efforts, to act effectively with the international community and to coordinate with the regional and international organizations in search for a just and lasting solution to the Middle East dispute. In this connection, I would like to express our full support and backing for the resolutions adopted by the Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs in their last meeting held in Cairo. I am

confident that the cooperation and coordination between our organizations will have the best results in supporting the national rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of stability and security in the Middle East.

In conclusion, I pray to Almighty Allah that He will guide this meeting toward achieving its noble goals. He is the All-Hearing Who answers the prayers.

Wassalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh



PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, REMARKS AFTER MEETING US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, JERICHO, 30 NOVEMBER 2006

In the name of the God, the merciful. We strongly welcome Dr. Condoleezza Rice who is visiting us in these political times which the region is going through and particularly the peace process agenda. We have discussed with Dr. Rice today the issues related to pushing the peace process forward and to implement the roadmap entirely which includes the Arab Peace Initiative which entails President Bush's vision which lately he stated about certain principles referred to the Israeli Prime Minister Olmert when he spoke positively about the creation of a Palestinian, independent Palestinian contiguous state and when he indicated to the Arab Peace Initiative positively. I believe that what he said in this direction is very encouraging in order to push the peace process forward.

At the same time, we spoke about the truce, the ceasefire, which we have striking Gaza. And we - which we also hope that it will be applied to the West Bank mutually and hereby we can say that once we apply this in the West Bank and enhance the ceasefire in the West Bank and Gaza, to go back to the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, which we reached and signed with Prime Minister Sharon. Of course, this will naturally help us to calm the situation and prepare the path for the peace process.

And also we discussed with Secretary Rice our persistent efforts to create a national unity government. And it is known that this is - creating a national unity government and is an important goal for us and we believe that once this government is created will end the siege, the sanctions imposed on the Palestinian people. We have exerted all efforts and we work in different directions and through different proposals. But unfortunately, now we have reached an impasse, a deadlock. This is painful and very painful to us because we know how much our people are suffering in terms of difficulties for the past eight or nine months until now. The people are deprived of resources and salaries. But unfortunately, I say we have not succeeded. We have not reached the concluding end result that we wanted. We wanted to have a national unity government which is capable to move forward and is a government that is capable to deal with the international community, to understand the international resolutions, the Arab resolutions and the Palestinian understandings and commitments in order to end the suffering and the pains of our people. But this is what happened and we state the truth as is.

In addition, we also spoke about the prisoners. We have a chronic problem called the prisoners, 10,000 prisoners at the - this is the figure six or eight months ago, but now maybe there are more until when the Palestinian families and the prisoners will continue to suffer from being in jail. Of course, there are efforts exerted to release or free the soldier and we support these efforts and we want the soldier to be released. But at the same time and the same enthusiasm, we want to release Palestinian prisoners.

And unfortunately, I would like also to say that settlement and settlement activities are continuing. The Palestinian land is being undermined and taken away day after day. This of course, does not help peace and does not help our - does not help us to get to the aspired peace that we want. We want the Palestinian state and the Palestinians to live alongside with Israel. We don't deny that. A contiguous state, as Olmert indicated and as was confirmed by President Bush, this is our goal and any obstacles on that path will obstruct and undermine these efforts. Therefore what we want is to have a political

track, a track for political issues, and another track for daily issues, things that the people suffer from, prisoners, roadblocks, obstacles, deprivation of many things and issues that the Palestinian people are deprived from. If this happens, then we give the two peoples hope that the peace is coming and imminent. We must give people hope. People must not feel despair because - or feel frustrated because frustration leads to extremism and extremism leads to known consequences. We all know the consequences.

I, once again, welcome Dr. Rice, who is visiting us these days here in Jericho and this is the second time that she visits us in Jericho. And we hope that the next visit comes at a time that we have concrete results and steps that are implemented on the ground to give our people the hope that peace is coming and imminent. Thank you.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS AFTER MEETING
PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, JERICHO, 30 NOVEMBER 2006**

Thank you very much, Mr. President. First of all let me thank you for your leadership and for your compassion and for what you have been doing for your people in recent months. You have done it for a lifetime, but in recent months your efforts to forge a national unity government that would have been able to end the political crisis in which the Palestinian people find themselves with a government that could gain the support and respect of the international community. I think your efforts have been extraordinary. Thank you for those efforts. Thank you also for the efforts that you've made to bring about a ceasefire - in the ceasefire that is now in effect in Gaza and that we hope will be consolidated so that it can be extended because we would hope in time for a comprehensive ceasefire.

Let me also say that you enjoy and you have always enjoyed and you continue to enjoy the deep respect and admiration of the international community, of the United States in particular and of President Bush and myself. And one reason that I wanted to come today was to have an opportunity to talk with you about how we can intensify our efforts to support our commitment toward progress on a two-state solution. I think that everybody recognizes that the creation of a viable, independent democratic Palestinian state that can live side by side in peace with Israel would be not just a remarkable achievement but a just achievement for the Palestinian people.

And I wanted to come and continue what has been an ongoing dialogue with you about how we accelerate our efforts. In that regard I agree completely that the speech of Olmert was a very positive development, I think an effort to reach out to a Palestinian partner. And I'm going now to Jerusalem. I will speak with Prime Minister Olmert about the positive elements in that speech and hopefully we can take this moment to accelerate our efforts that intensify our efforts toward the two-state solution that we all desire.

The President and I also did have an opportunity to talk about a number of other issues, including how to improve conditions for the Palestinian people. We're all concerned about the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people, but particularly in Gaza. And I want to repeat what I said many times: We want to do everything that we can to ease movement and access. The daily difficulties, the daily humiliations that are associated with life for the Palestinian people simply but be eased. And I will work with you, Mr. President, with the Israelis to do precisely that.

Well, thank you very much for welcoming me here in Jericho. It is actually our second meeting in Jericho. We met here when I was National Security Advisor a number of years ago and it's good to see you as always, Mr. President. Thank you.



ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER TZIPI LIVNI, REMARKS AFTER MEETING US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, JERUSALEM, 30 NOVEMBER 2006

I would like to welcome Secretary Rice to Jerusalem and to the region once again. Thank you so much. This is a special week, I do hope so anyway, and the beginning - we saw the beginning, I hope, of a cease-fire and then the most important speech of Prime Minister Olmert, sending a message to the moderates in the Palestinian Authority, saying that there is a political horizon, but there are some steps that - which are needed.

I would like also to thank the United States and Secretary Rice for the leadership, for the policy which on one hand said that there is no just cause for terrorism and it should be stopped, and on the other hand, sending a message to the moderates saying that there is this vision of two states and saying that there is a political horizon supporting and strengthening the moderates. I do believe that this represents the interest of the region, the interest of the moderates, the interests of Israel, and the moderates in the Palestinian Authority, as well as the international community. Thank you.



US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS AFTER MEETING ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER TZIPI LIVNI, JERUSALEM, 30 NOVEMBER 2006

Well, thank you very much, Minister Livni, for having me here. Indeed, it has been a week of progress, a week that we hope can be consolidated. The cease-fire now needs to be consolidated by actions to make certain that it is enforced. I also appreciate the statement of restraint that the Israeli Government has issued concerning the cease-fire, because it is, of course, quite fragile, but we would like to see it consolidated and then extended.

It was also a very popular speech by Prime Minister Olmert and, I think, a hand reaching out to a Palestinian partner. I was just with President Abbas. He is, indeed, a man who has been committed to a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the establishment of two states, democratic and independent living side by side in freedom. We will have discussions, brief though they will be, about how we might continue to move forward on the vision of those two states living side by side. And I appreciate very much your having me here.



US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS TO THE 2006 FORUM FOR THE FUTURE, DEAD SEA, JORDAN, 1 DECEMBER 2006 [EXCERPTS]

[...] In recent years, Arab experts have identified some challenges facing the people of this region, among them poverty and violence and the lack of freedom and democracy. In fact, these challenges, combined with the fact that a majority of this region's population is under the age of 24, led the authors of the recent Arab Human Development Report to conclude that maintaining the status quo would be an "impending disaster scenario."

It is that urgent need for political reform that led to the creation of the Foundation for the Future. This is an institution based on the belief that, with serious and comprehensive reform, citizens of the broader Middle East can enjoy the freedoms and opportunities they deserve.

Government and civil society leaders from the region have come together to make the foundation a reality. They are setting priorities for the programs, seeking support around the world, and laying the groundwork to make their first grants. This serious effort provides hope to all in the broader Middle East who dream of greater peace, and prosperity, and freedom.

These same people can take hope in the fact that the world is coming together to support their work and their dreams. The government of Turkey was the first to contribute to the Foundation for the Future, and it is being joined by governments of the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

I want just to make two comments from an American perspective. The first is to say we know that the process of reform, the extremely important process of reform, is taking place in a regional context that is indeed very difficult. We have heard comments today, and, indeed, we had a long discussion last night of the many regional challenges whether they are to bring peace, stability and democracy to Iraq, and the hope for that young Iraqi democracy to develop and sustain itself; whether it is the challenges the democratically elected government of Lebanon now faces; or, of course, the desire of all to finally see a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and an end to that conflict and the establishment of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and freedom. We know these regional challenges form a backdrop in which it is sometimes difficult to continue the work of reform. But the work of reform must continue despite those regional challenges.

That said, the United States is absolutely committed to helping the region deal with those challenges, and, in particular, I want to speak to my personal commitment and that of President Bush to finding a way to bring about a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

President Bush was the first American president to make as a matter of policy the need for a Palestinian state. And we have been actively engaged in the years of his presidency in trying to bring that to fruition. But I can tell you that in the final two years of this administration it is our intention to be even more actively and intensively engaged because there will be no better achievement than to see a just outcome in which the Palestinian people finally receive their own state. They are people who have suffered greatly but who have enormous potential to contribute to a Middle East that lives in peace and in democracy and in security with all of its neighbors.

The final comment I would like to make is that the United States also understands that democracy and reform do not come easily, that they come, of course, from indigenous forces that are determined to have them, not from outside forces. But perhaps the United States, more than any, and perhaps I more than most, can understand how difficult the course of democracy can be. [...]

I want to assure you that as we are a partner in the great work of reform and democracy here in the Middle East, that we do so with a sense of humility, with a sense of our own imperfections, and with a sense that, if we stay committed to our work, the historic outcome of a democratic and peaceful Middle East that sometimes now seems very difficult will one day seem to have been inevitable.

Thank you very much.



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON
FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS TO THE PRESS,
GAZA CITY, 2 DECEMBER 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

[The following is an edited summary of Solana's remarks to the press, following meetings with Pres. Mahmoud Abbas and PLC member Mohammed Dahlan.]

Thank you very much, Mr President. It is a great pleasure to be back here in Gaza. It is not the first time that I have come here and you know that it will not be the last.

You can be sure that, on behalf of the European Union, I will be accompanying the very important decisions that the President will be taking. I want to say that he is taking very courageous decisions which are for the benefit of the people of Palestine. You can be sure that you can always on us, the EU.

The President has made tremendous efforts to form a government of national unity. This has been very difficult, impossible, and therefore the President now has to take some difficult decision and, in those decisions, I can tell you clearly, you can count on our support.

We spoke about the ceasefire and the President told us very clearly what is the value of the ceasefire and we value it very much. I want to say publicly that the President has shown very great courage and he has taken the right decision.

Question: Can you tell us if the siege imposed on the Palestinian people will be lifted?

You know that some conditions have to be met in order to have full cooperation with the international community. The President has made a tremendous effort to get these conditions accepted by the government, to form a national unity government to get these conditions accepted. As you know, it has been impossible for the moment to get these conditions accepted and therefore the situation will continue. Everybody has to know who is responsible. It is not the President.

Question: What is your message to the Hamas-led government?

I can say that they had an offer by the President which was a generous offer and it was an offer that would have solved many of the problems of the Palestinians but unfortunately that offer has not been accepted. I want to say once again that the efforts of the President have been really tireless, over months, weeks, days, nights, to try and get agreement to the very generous offer, with our support. The responsibility (for the failure) is not that of the President.



PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, DECISIONS DURING THE MEETING TO STUDY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS, RAMALLAH, 10 DECEMBER 2006

1. Full and serious dealing with all the international initiatives and efforts to revive the peace process, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track, as this represents the key to tackling all the crises of the region.

Based on this, the PLO Executive Committee highly appreciates the Baker-Hamilton Report and considers the recommendations mentioned in the report as an introduction to ending the stalemate and retreat that hit the political process; the report also assists in setting the correct principles towards start of negotiations within an international context that tackles the main final-status issues towards reaching the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders and solving the refugees cause through a just and agreed upon solution according to the Arab Peace Initiative. The PLO Executive Committee also highly appreciates the European Initiative and the position of British PM Tony Blair and his efforts to revive the political process. Based on this, the PLO Executive Committee affirms its full readiness to participate in all steps to revive the peace process and return to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, since the PLO Executive Committee is the address and it is the sole and legitimate representative, and all matters pertaining to the crisis of the government that represent a Palestinian internal affair that does not affect the role of the PLO, as confirmed by the recent National Conciliation Document that the PLO is the sole body with full responsibility for the negotiations file.

2. The PLO Executive Committee studies the report submitted to it by the six-member committee which was commissioned by the PLO Executive Committee last week and decided to form several committees to activate its role and the role of its departments at the various levels. The PLO Executive Committee also took several decisions on reformulating the Higher Negotiations Committee and the Committee to activate the role of the Palestinian National Fund and set up the appropriate recommendations to that effect, and start with activating the role of the special committee dealing with holding the national dialogue to activate the PLO. The PLO Executive Committee also decided to call for holding a meeting of the Palestinian Central Council and for setting a date for that meeting in agreement with the PNC Speaker's Office.

The PLO Executive Committee decided to activate the Secretariat and commission one of its members to be in charge of the Secretariat and to commission a special committee to study the law for the PNC elections according to full proportional representation. All these steps aim to see the PLO Executive Committee assume a responsible role to end the current deterioration happening on more than one level and to intensify the efforts to end the siege imposed on the Palestinian people and their PNA, especially the political and economic siege and not to lose the chance and opportunity for the Palestinian people on activating the political process.

3. The PLO Executive Committee expressed the need for the President to deliver a comprehensive speech to the Palestinian people this week to define the approaches and trends needed to put an end to the government crisis.

The PLO Executive Committee expressed its support to the position that was presented by the President and which he will announce in the speech he will deliver.

4. The Committee affirms its rejection to any measures or decisions issued by the government that can lead to establishing security apparatuses parallel to the official apparatuses and institutions; the PLO Executive Committee warns of the dangers of such steps on internal security and peace, especially that these aim to consolidate the official formation of special armies which sabotage the current and future efforts to establish a Palestinian national unity government.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS,
BRUSSELS, 14/15 DECEMBER 2006 [EXCERPTS]**

DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

The European Council noted with concern that the Middle East is faced with one of the worst crises in years. The Israeli-Arab conflict is at the heart of this crisis. The EU is committed to overcoming the current impasse in the peace process and to easing tensions in the broader region.

The ceasefire in Gaza is an important first step. Violations of the ceasefire must end and it should be extended to the West Bank. For the ceasefire to be meaningful and sustainable it must be consolidated through a political process. In this respect the European Council noted Prime Minister Olmert's address of 27 November. The EU welcomed the readiness of President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert to resume dialogue, and urged them to meet soon. The European Council also invited the other members of the Quartet and the regional partners to intensify common efforts aimed at reinvigorating the peace process.

The European Council commended the efforts of President Abbas over the last six months to form a government of national unity. The EU stands ready to work with a legitimate Palestinian government that adopts a platform reflecting the Quartet principles. If such a government is formed, the EU undertakes: to resume partnership with the Palestinian government and encourage Quartet partners to do likewise; to continue, with other donors, providing financial support and to prepare, in cooperation with the new government, a long-term plan on capacity building, border management and unified and effective security forces, as well as a functioning administration.

The European Council called for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier and commended efforts including by partners in the region to that effect. The European Council also called for the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators detained in Israel.



**PALESTINIAN PRIME MINISTER ISMAIL HANIYEH,
SPEECH ON PALESTINIAN TV, 19 DECEMBER 2006**

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
"O my Lord! expand me my breast; ease my task for me and
remove the impediment from my speech, so they may understand what I say."

"Our Lord! (they say), 'Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thine own Presence; for Thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure.'" [Qur'anic verses]

As I begin this comprehensive speech, I send my warmest greetings to all the Palestinian people at home and in exile and to all peoples in our Arab and Islamic nation who have constituted and continue to constitute backing and support for the Palestinians. I appreciate their warm feelings and their love for the Palestinian people and their just cause. Greetings to our pious martyrs who watered this blessed land with their blood. Greetings to our brave sons who suffered injuries, our heroic prisoners in Israeli jails who are spending the best part of their lives in captivity for the sake of our dignity and freedom, for the sake of Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and our sanctities, and for the sake of Palestine. Greetings and God's mercy to the martyrs who fell during the current painful events which have been going on in dear parts of our blessed Palestinian land since the events at the [Rafah] Crossing and until this movement. All those who fell as martyrs are our sons, whether they are from the Hamas Movement or Fatah, and whether they are from the security services or others. They are all our men, our sons, the sons of Palestine. We have lived and always learned that the Palestinian blood is precious, and that it should be shed in well-known places; namely, in defence of our land, people, and sanctities. It is the price of emancipation from the occupation and the restoration of rights, including and topped by the rights of the refugees to return to their land and homes.

Here I would like to send my thanks and appreciation for our Arab and Muslim brothers who received me and the Palestinian delegation during the outgoing tour and visits. This has had a great impact on us and our people. These states welcomed and embraced us and emphasized that the Palestinian cause is the cause of the [Islamic/Arab] nation, that the besieged Palestinian people cannot be left alone to face this unjust siege. We express our thanks and appreciation for our Arab and Islamic states and the peoples of this great and blessed nation.

O my Palestinian people. We have heard President Abu-Mazin's [Mahmud Abbas] speech. This speech touched on many issues and topics that made it necessary for us in the government to clarify our views and stands on them, not by way of retorts and argumentation and not to display certain stands but out of our desire to give a testimony for history and to defend the trust that we accepted and to which we committed ourselves in front of our Palestinian people; namely, that we will always provide them with the facts about what is going on in terms of our Palestinian conditions and all domestic and external developments.

These clarifications are in two parts. The first was what the interior minister presented at his news conference where he explained the security developments since he took over as interior minister and until now. Today I would like to pause at several points, especially the political issues, discussions, and the points that the president raised on meanings and cultures. I will be addressing our people inside the occupied Palestinian territory as well as our people who have been living in exile and in the Diaspora for over 50 years.

Here I would like to note that as Palestinians we are all in the same boat, on the same ship, and that we are all eager to take this ship to the shores of safety. Our people must enjoy freedom, return, and independence. I reiterate that we are in the same trench. There are political differences. Perhaps, these differences caused wounds. The Palestinian people will remain united in the face of the occupation. Despite the wounds inflicted upon us in the past days, they will not engage in infighting. They will rectify matters and redirect efforts to the programme of liberation, restoration of rights, and protecting the dignity of the Palestinian people. However, I emphasize, based on our responsibility and position, and my affiliation to my religion, my creed, and my Palestinian people and nation, that these people will remain united in the face of the occupation and aggression and will not engage in internecine battles despite the wounds that have afflicted us over these past days.

Our people will rectify matters and point the compass once again towards the project of emancipation, the restoration of our rights, and the protection of the dignity of these people, this great heroic people, who are steadfast, firm, and in readiness. They are people who started this blessed Intifadah and of-

ferred this splendid model of sacrifices and suffered all these torments and deaths. These people will not fail their nation or their loving brothers by engaging in any internecine battles that might expand to reach the extent, God forbid, of what the enemies and occupiers and the haters of this great Palestinian people have been planning.

O Palestinian people, O sons of our and Islamic nation. We have bypassed one of the important turning points in the history of our Palestinian movement, perhaps starting with the dialogues and the understandings that were reached within the Cairo dialogue agreement on 17 March 2005. This agreement was based on several pillars. The first was holding municipal and legislative elections that would end by the late 2005. Secondly it was based on emphasizing the restructuring, development, and the revitalization of the PLO because it is considered the broad arena for all our Palestinian people at home and abroad. Thirdly, taking due consideration of our Palestinian people's supreme national interests in completing the Israeli enemy withdrawal from Gaza Strip, so that the Palestinian people might enjoy freedom and sovereignty over a dear part of the Palestinian territory that has been liberated by resistance, steadfastness, and unity.

In light of this agreement, we decided to participate in parliamentary elections. Some of our brothers in the Palestinian arena blamed us saying that we had not been part of the political system, or part of the Palestinian [National] Authority; that we were seeking an alternative authority, that we were moving outside the official framework. Everyone had been reiterating that the Hamas Movement should be part of the political system. Intellectuals, analysts, and leaders said that the way to do that and put the Palestinian house in order were elections.

The legislative elections were held with fairness and transparency, and the Palestinian people were proud of these elections. In fact many analysts thought that the legislative elections would be a cause for Palestinian divisions and infighting. However, our people and national and Islamic factions cooperated and reached agreement and presented these elections in this clean and civilized manner, this democratic manner of which boasted in front of the entire world. We said that this was a source of pride for people who were suffering under occupation and yet held such elections. It was unparalleled in many world countries.

In fact when we as a Movement decided to participate in elections, we were sincere in our desire to strengthen national unity, develop the political system, end monopolization of decision-making, and develop the Palestinian strategy based on political pluralism.

The elections were held and the results were announced. The Palestinian people granted their confidence to the Hamas Movement, by electing the parliamentary majority from the Movement. This means that they voted for adhering to Palestinian rights and constant principles, for reform, for change, for the plan of steadfastness, firmness, and resistance. Thus the parliament was formed in this way and all components of the Palestinian arena were represented.

From the moment the results were declared, and perhaps even before that, during our election programme, we spoke of the need to form a national unity government. This is because we had believed that the Palestinian cause and the complex reality and conditions required the existence of national unity government in order to strengthen political pluralism. Thus we began a broad and profound dialogue with all the brothers in the Palestinian arena, with all nationalist and Islamic forces, and with independent figures of prominence.

Personally, after President Abu-Mazin asked me to form the government, I visited many prominent and political figures and I met with the various forces and factions. The Movement formed its delegation to the talks with our brothers in the nationalist and Islamic forces. We spent almost all of the constitutional time we were given to enable us to form the government in holding this dialogue with all our brothers in the arena. We were careful and concerned - and that was absolutely not rhetoric - to establish a national unity government. However, this aim was not to be realized.

Here I would like to pause at some remarks by brother Abu-Mazin. He said that all the factions refused to participate with Hamas in such a government because Hamas refused to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Here I would like to recall the programme that we amended many times until it took its final shape and which we presented to our brothers in the nationalist and Islamic forces, with emphasis on matters related to the PLO.

It was as follows: Concerning the PLO, the Cairo understandings issued on 17 March 2005 say: The conferees agreed to develop and activate the PLO in accordance with the principles that would later be agreed upon, so the PLO would include all Palestinian forces and factions, making it true to its description as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Thus a committee was formed to define these bases. The committee would be formed from the speaker of the Palestine National Council, the members of the PLO Executive Committee, the secretaries general of all factions, and independent Palestinian figures. The PLO Executive Committee chairman would issue calls for such meetings.

That was the formula mentioned in the Cairo understandings and we of course were part of these understandings. Now look at the programmes which we presented to the Palestinian nationalist and Islamic factions. There are many points but I just would like to discuss the issue of the PLO and the reasons why these forces and factions did not agree to participate with the Hamas Movement.

In point eight of this programme, which we presented to the brothers on 19 March 2006 - and this perhaps was the final formula reached after prolonged discussions - we said: The government reiterated what was agreed by the Palestinian factions at the Cairo dialogue in March of 2005 on the issue of the PLO; namely, restructuring and revitalizing it on democratic basis, ensuring the participation of all and emphasizing the need to speed efforts to implement the necessary measures to do that.

Then where is the problem? We say that these are the Cairo understandings. In our programme presented to the national and Islamic forces during the dialogue held on the issue of the national unity government, we reaffirmed what was mentioned in this formula. Therefore, the problem was not at all because of us. It had nothing to do with the PLO at all.

O our people, our nation, I would like to say sincerely and frankly that the failure of certain forces to participate was due to several reasons. For instance, some of our brothers in the arena found it difficult to participate in a HAMAS-led government.

One day, one of the brother figures said at a big rally: It would be shameful for the Fatah Movement to participate in a Hamas-led government. There was another dimension related to psychology, absorbing others into the political system, the results of the elections, and the inability to digest the results.

Therefore, in light of this it was impossible to form the national unity government. Some even said that this government was a failure, and that in one or two months the government would fall, so why participate in such a government? There were US and external pressures exercised on certain figures, names, and forces to prevent them from participating in the government. The Americans threatened that whoever participates in this government would be classified as a terrorist. Therefore, this issue has nothing to do with the PLO. I have already explained matters related to the PLO.

I also add to this my own arguments during my speech and the policy statement that I presented to the Legislative Council. I spoke very clearly on the issue of the PLO. Anyone who wants to go back to it is welcome to do so. The statement based on which I won the vote of confidence was very clear on the PLO issue, to the extent that some brothers, and to be exact the comrades in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], having heard the statement, started to contact us for a possible participation in the government. This proves that the PLO was not the problem. The PFLP comrades wanted to enter into the government. I delayed presenting the names of the members of the govern-

ment for taking oath before president Abu-Mazin by 48 hours because I had been waiting for a response from the PFLP brothers on the issue of their participation. Of course, they made another decision later and we respect their decisions in this regard. In the same statement, I said that the door of the government would be open to every faction and every Palestinian figure desirous of participating in the national unity government.

Then we formed the government and we went to parliament alone and shouldered the responsibility. We told our people, this great people who gave us their vote of confidence, that we were worthy of their trust and we would accept their trust and go to parliament. We have done our part during these dialogues and for reasons that I have just mentioned they did not want to participate in the government.

From the very moment when we formed the government, we found ourselves facing absolutely abnormal circumstances and in more than one direction.

The first was the external direction. There was an economic and financial siege, an attempt to impose political isolation on this government, preventing it from interacting, not even with regional and international sides, and then unleashing Israel to kill, destroy, and tamper with Palestinian land and people, creating a climate of lawlessness. Because of this large-scale aggression against our Palestinian people, we began to live under these conditions from the first moment. There was financial and economic siege, political isolation, and an open war.

In terms of the political isolation, we want our people and our [Arab/Islamic] nation as well to know that conferences are being held in the region, discussing issues related to the Palestinian cause or some of its aspects. We, the government, are not invited to attend these conferences and meetings. Palestine is represented by some brothers who have nothing to do with the government at all. Within attempts at political isolation, brother President Abu-Mazin did not meet with the government, not even once, over the past nine months. Our brother, the president, who uses the expression this is my government, has not met with the government. In his Arab or non-Arab tours he never included any minister in his delegation. He has not asked any minister to come to his headquarters in Ramallah or here in Gaza, to receive with him any Arab or non-Arab minister who happens to be visiting Palestine. This never happened.

I asked brother Abu-Mazin about this. He said that some states do not want to deal with the government. This may be true but there are states that deal with the government. Some states received us. We visited them. Some Arab ministers came to the area and they did not object to the presence of one or two ministers from the government.

This exclusion was very clearly part of attempts at the political isolation of this government, in conjunction with the financial and economic siege of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian government. This is in addition to the aggressions that you have seen - the siege, the closure of the crossings, the sea blockade, and the freezing of more than \$600 million withheld by the Israelis. We have lived through this from the beginning. The other direction had to do with internal conditions.

From the beginning we experienced the measures of withdrawing the prerogatives of this government. The powers of this government were transferred to the presidential office. Therefore, we formed a government without money - indeed it was in debt to the value of \$1,300 million. We formed a government without media. The official Palestinian television, which is supposed to belong to the Ministry of Information, was not with the government. Of course I appreciate the efforts of all my brother workers in the media. I had always wanted the Palestinian television to reflect the beautiful climate of expressing the ideas of its government. However, I would like to point out that my tour as a prime minister visiting the sisterly states of Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, Syria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Sudan and meeting with presidents, leaders, and figures, was not covered by the Palestinian television. It did not cover it despite the fact that this is my television, the television of the Palestinian government and people.

Therefore, we formed a government without media, without money, without crossings, and without embassies, so much so that some employees in some ministries contacted our Palestinian ambassadors

and said they wanted to deal with them on certain issues directly and not through the Palestinian foreign minister.

This is just one of these letters [holding a paper to the camera]. An employee, the under secretary of a ministry, sends to all ambassadors the following letter. This is the text: 'We would like to inform Your Excellency that the correspondence between us and you should be direct, and not through the Foreign Ministry, because of the policies and movements of Foreign Minister Mahmud al-Zahhar. Therefore, we hope the correspondence will be sent directly through the office of the under secretary - her name is written and I do not want to mention it - or through the General Regional and International Relations Administration.

This letter was written by an employee and there are many like it. It addresses the ambassadors and tells them not to deal with the foreign minister and that the embassies should contact the employees directly. Some circulars were distributed to certain ambassadors asking them to stop dealing with the foreign minister.

Therefore, we assumed the task of forming this government under these conditions and in this form. The powers were withdrawn and recommendations were not approved. This government has adopted about 100 decisions over the past nine months within what is called top-grade employees. President Abu-Mazin approved only 24 of them. For the past six or seven months we have been discussing these decisions with brother Abu-Mazin and he has been giving us promises but these decisions continue to be frozen. Moreover, we have been employing very qualified people to strengthen the Palestinian Authority. Some 48 holding the bachelor degree - this is mentioned in the statistics [holding papers to the camera] and they are now with the president - 25 holding the master's degree, and 15 holding the doctoral degree in various specialties. We are not adding a burden to the government burdens but this is a qualitative addition to the administration. Yet, they have not been approved so far. Therefore, powers are withdrawn, decisions are not approved.

We have also experienced the issue of protests. One month after the elections and the government, we faced armed protests and the demands for salaries and so on. Later we entered into the matter of the prisoners document and events that was associated with it. Then we faced the open-ended strikes, especially in the health and education sectors. An almost total strike prevailed in the West Bank area. We did not turn our backs to these strikes. Time and again, we sat with the brothers, the union leaders, and the federation representatives. Sometimes we reached agreements and understandings with the brother strikers but they used to receive instructions from certain individuals who were close to the president telling them not to implement the agreements that were held with the government.

As recently as three or four days ago, an agreement was reached and it was about to be signed under the auspices of the president and the prime minister. Suddenly, when the brothers went to the presidential office to sit with the teachers and officials and health ministry employees, Dr Rafiq al-Husayni, the director of President Abu-Mazin's office presented new conditions and mechanisms to delay the process of signing the agreement of which the strikers approved. This was within our commitment to these various sectors.

We have lived through this. We are still living through it. We did not capitulate. We visited Arab, Islamic, European, and Latin American states and we collected money. Perhaps during the latest tour of the prime minister and his delegation, we secured about \$700 million. Additional funds might also come from inside the country or from the Arab League and this will definitely end the issue of the siege and tackle this crisis which the Palestinian people are living through. This crisis will certainly not continue. Therefore, we acted on many levels to solve this problem. We paid visits and signed bilateral agreements, and we discussed political formulas with European states and, yes, we also presented political concepts even concerning the Palestinian people's national aim of establishing their state within the 1967 borders, our vision of this issue, and how we treated it.

Here I also would like to refer to the president's speech. He said: The brothers had been saying: We want all of Palestine, and suddenly they started talking about the 1967 borders and a 15-year truce.

The president added: This means that we will have to live for 15 more years to begin the phase of the process of calm.

This is not what we said. We are talking about a truce after the establishment of a state within the 1967 borders, for 10 or 15 years. We do not want to wait for 15 years. This means that if the Israelis want to leave the 1967 areas tomorrow, then we will give them 10 or 20 years truce and it can be renewed. The time period has nothing to do with it. It does not mean that our people will have to wait for 15 years. It means that the truce that might last 10 or 15 years would be after the establishment of the Palestinian state and after the occupation's approval of this state. We wanted to draw up details for this issue in one form or another.

Now to the issue of the dialogues. I mean by this the dialogues that began with the prisoners document. Here I would like to explain something. We do not intend to use this issue as a chip on the table of political blackmail. The issue sounds as if there are some who support the prisoners and detainees and some others who are opposed to them. We do not do this. The resistance factions know how to deal with the prisoners and how to handle the cause of the prisoners. But I would like to pause at certain points in the prisoners document.

The first point is that the [Abbas] speech - this one or the one before it - says: We told the brothers to agree to the prisoners document and they refused, and adds: Two or three weeks later they returned to the prisoners document. It means that we wasted three weeks of the time of the Palestinian people and then we returned to document. This is not true. The prisoners document was subjected to internal Palestinian discussion, both in Ramallah and in Gaza. Amendments were introduced to it. Hamas approved it based on these amendments. We did not wait for three weeks and then accept what we had rejected. We accepted the version to which the necessary amendments were introduced. One can go back to the prisoners document and see the original text which was issued from the Hadarim prison, from the brother leaders whom we salute and acclaim, the great leaders who participated in drafting this document, the brother leader Marwan al-Barghuthi, the brother leader Al-Sa'di, brother leader Abd-al-Khaliq al-Natshah, the brother leader Mullah. This was the original document, after discussing it we introduced amendments and approved it.

Secondly, why should the one who loves the prisoners and who sponsors their document and who wants to deal with this document not commit himself to forming a national unity government based on the national reconciliation document, which is the prisoners document? We are saying: Come and let us form a government based on the reconciliation document, which had been called the prisoners document? Who is turning his back to the prisoners document? Who is turning his back to the national reconciliation document? Some might say that there is talk about plans to form a national unity government based on the national reconciliation document. However, when we enter into the details of the dialogue we find that the terms of the dialogue are different and the terms of what we are presented with undermine the national reconciliation document. I will explain this.

We completed the document and arranged it as a political basis for a national unity government. After that we arrived at the issue of the guidelines [al-muhaddidat]. I would like to briefly discuss some aspects of this issue. The guidelines were approved. The security considerations of the Hamas Movement are extremely complicated - in the West Bank, abroad, and with the prisoners. When they sent this paper to the brothers in their various places, some observations were received. Before our brother Abu-Mazin travelled from Gaza to Ramallah and to Amman, I met him at his house in the presence of Dr Ziyad Abu-Amr. I told him that these guidelines on which the brothers in Fatah and Hamas agreed and which were signed by the people are supported by us as they are but there are certain emendations that I would like to present to you. He said: What are they? I said that the word resistance must be mentioned in point one. Abu-Amr said, brother Abu-al-Abd [Haniyah] this can be mentioned in the statement that the government will present to the Legislative Council. We said all right, we agree.

We said there was no need for mentioning the issue of the negotiations higher committee because political talks were continuing on it. Concerning the [Saudi peace] initiative, we said that instead of

initiative, we would like to use the term that was mentioned in the national reconciliation document and which everyone signed. He asked: What was that? I told him: The Arab legitimacy. The Arab legitimacy is a loose term that takes all interpretations. If one wants the initiative he will discern it and those who do not want the initiative will not see it, so let us return to the term that was mentioned in the national reconciliation document. Brother Abu-Mazin said that it would be difficult now to introduce any changes on this point. Therefore, we agreed to keep the door for dialogue open.

No sooner had brother Abu-Mazin left Gaza than certain brother officials at the presidential office issued statements claiming that Hamas conceded the constant principles, approved two-state solution, and moved to the opposite position. Thus, people started wondering, given the media clamour and the atmosphere that was created, and this required an explanation.

Brother Abu-Mazin says that he went to the Americans and he found many statements, but in fact the first statements on the issue of the guidelines were issued there. Therefore we contacted Dr Abu-Amr and some others and we told them to contact these people to stop these statements because this would require responses. Therefore, we issued responses to explain our position; namely, that we are still at our political position, that these guidelines mean this, this, and this.

The president mentioned the issue of the Arab initiative in a way that gave the impression that as a government, we were engaged in a battle with our Arab brothers, especially with our brothers, the dear ones, in Saudi Arabia, whom we respect and appreciate. We do not forget their genuine Islamic and Arab stand towards the Palestinian people and their cause. But to say that that we do not want their initiative, as though we are against them, is impermissible. They cannot say that. We told the Arab League secretary general and all our brothers: We have no problem with our brothers on the issue of the initiative. The problem is between all of us, the Arab brothers on the one and Israel on the other. Israel does not accept the initiative. No sooner had the initiative been announced, than Sharon occupied the West Bank and besieged president Abu-Ammar, may God have mercy on his soul. We told them that when the Israelis say they approve the Arab initiative, we will have no problem with you. We are part of the Arab nation, we are in the Arab fold. We said that if the initiative talks about a state within the 1967 borders, then all the Hamas leaders and the entire government will agree with our Arab brothers. Let us have a state within the 1967 borders.

There is a flaw in the initiative compared to our political vision. This is related to its provisions but we said let the Israelis approve it first and we will have no problem with our Arab brothers on this issue.

Then we moved to the issue of the visit to Gaza by Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad who also visited Damascus and met with Mr Khalid Mish'al and his brothers and the Hamas political bureau members and then came to Gaza. He met with the president and his aides and then he met with us. Our brother Abu-Jabr [Shaykh Hamad], the Qatari foreign minister, presented a paper to us and we discussed certain issues and we gave him some observations and said that, God willing, we would return back to him. He said: I will go to brother Abu-Mazin and will return back to you. That was at two in the morning. The foreign minister returned and contacted us and said that it seemed the paper would not be approved. Why? Because the Americans rejected it and because some of those who were at the meeting with the president said that since the Americans rejected it then it would be difficult for them to approve it.

Therefore, when the Qatari foreign minister met with me he was somewhat displeased with some of those who were present at the meeting with president Abu-Mazin. They were discourteous to the man even though he was a guest of our country and were about to start an altercation there had the president not calmed them down. I asked the Qatari foreign minister: What now? He told me word for word: Your position is impeccable and you are not to blame; you have done your part. The problem is not with you. I will be leaving Gaza now for Qatar.

Yet, we are held responsible for the failure of the Qatari foreign minister's visit. He told me once again these same words when he was in Gaza and he repeated them when he contacted me from

Washington. The Qatari foreign minister said: My brother, you in the government and Hamas you are not to blame. You have done your part and your position is impeccable. The problem is not with you.

In fact had our brothers wanted to exploit the flexibility that we demonstrated and the formulas that we presented, we would have formed a national unity government. It was clear that there was something, certain formulas, and the adopted position: Either these or never. That was the problem.

Now to the last dialogue on the national unity government. The president said in his speech: When the brothers, having formed a government alone, felt that they were at an impasse, and they said let us have a dialogue. The president noted that the idea of a dialogue was raised by the Legislative Council.

First of all, we did not want a national unity government and a dialogue on it because we were at an impasse but because of our conviction. This was our idea in the first place. Before I formed my government, we held dialogue on the national unity government. Therefore, it was not an impasse but a sincere desire to pull the Palestinian arena together. We wanted the people to carry the burden collectively, stand shoulder to shoulder and carry the burden because the cause is greater than everyone and the people need everyone, not because we entered into an impasse but because we had a sense of responsibility and we wanted this ship to reach the shores of safety.

They came and said: We want a national unity government provided this government responds to the possibility of lifting the sanctions. We asked: What is required of us? They said first of all the prime minister, Abu-al-Abd, was a symbol. Now what was the word they used? O yes, they said he was a dashing character [shakhsyah faqi'ah]. They said that the Americans would not deal with such a symbolic and a dashing character. I said: Does this mean, brother Abu-Mazin, that if I quit, the Americans will cooperate with the government and respond and lift the sanctions? He said: Certainly this would be a big step. I told him: All right, I personally will give this concession.

The first concession that we offered to promote the chances of the national unity government was that despite the fact that constitutionally I should form any government because I am the head of the Hamas bloc in parliament, the head of the bloc that went to elections and which was the biggest bloc - constitutionally I should form the government - I conceded and my brothers conceded their constitutional rights and we offered this concession.

Another concession: They said the prominent figures and the leaders should not be in the government. This means Dr Mahmud al-Zahhar, Mr Sa'id Siyam, and others. We said: We are ready for this. We will remove them from the government in order to promotethe chances of the national unity government. Abu-Khalid, Abu-Mus'ab, Abu-Ala, and all those who are described as symbolic leaders or figures would go.

A third concession. We brought the name of someone, a minister who was not a dashing personality, not a symbol, and not a leader or anything like that, but was successful. He is even beardless [alluding to bearded Hamas figures] and we presented him. He is our brother Dr Basim Na'im. Two days later, they said it seems that Dr Basim Na'im would not be the proper choice. Indeed, we had information that the rejection of Dr Basim was planned internally. They told us that the Americans did not want him. We said: All right, since we are offering all these concessions in order to promote this national unity government, then we might as well concede our second candidate for the prime ministry. We presented a third candidate.

A fourth concession. Based on our position in parliament, our share in the government would be 14 out of 24 ministerial portfolios. We conceded five and accepted nine portfolios, giving five portfolios to independents in order to expand the ruling coalition.

After all these concessions - the prime minister's post, no symbols or leaders, we brought another name and it was rejected, and we accepted nine of 14 ministries - we were surprised that there were retreats from the principles and understandings that we agreed on. By way of explanation, we tell our

people that we agreed on the following five principles: A national unity government based on the national reconciliation document. The government would be formed by consultations and after selections by the parliamentary blocs and factions from among persons with integrity and efficiency and each side would present its candidates. Hamas would nominate a candidate for the prime minister's post and he would be approved by the president of the Palestinian [National] Authority. The presidency would work to ensure lifting the sanctions the moment the government is formed, and finally, the issue of restructuring the PLO within a specific timeframe.

At the eleventh hour of the dialogue we were surprised to find that these had been ignored in a noticeable manner. Secondly, certain issues that we had not agreed on were forced on the issue of the national unity government, such as the following objection: We will not be able to proceed with a national unity government before solving the problem of the captive [Israeli] soldier.

I have no connection with the captive soldier. What has the government to do with the captive soldier? The soldier is with the resistance factions - Hamas and the resistance factions - and the brothers in Egypt are exerting their valuable efforts and offering their mediations and they are proceeding along this path. Why should we link this with that? Let us proceed along parallel lines. We will carry on with the work to form a government by collective understanding, and this would be excellent, and the Egyptian brothers and the brothers with the resistance factions and the Israelis will be proceeding on their path and we hope they realize this as soon as possible.

The third thing was introducing into the understandings about the national unity government the suggestion that we must have comprehensive calm, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, before we take the government to parliament.

So the understandings were disavowed? How? When we started speaking about some ministries, we found out that brother Abu-Mazin and the other brothers do not want Hamas to be present at the foreign, interior, finance, or information ministry. We made concessions on the prime minister, the symbols, and leaders and in spite of this, we were also not supposed to be present in the interior, foreign, or finance ministries. Is this logical? There is a parliament, elections, and a people's willpower. It has become very clear that the objective was to achieve what was not achieved with the policy of the embargo and what was not achieved [changes thought] I would like here to emphasize some points and I would like our Palestinian people to be patient too and bear with us. There is an undeclared decision to topple the government and the Americans are leading this policy. They want to achieve what they failed to do over the past months through a dialogue that we were supposed to accept. This means that they want us and not others to do what they failed to do. They want us to voluntarily step down and turn our back to our people. They do not want us to have anything to do with the prime ministry, or the foreign, interior, finance, and other ministries. I am not speaking about quota sharing but about parliamentary bases and constitutional norms. I also speak about the fact that our Palestinian people will hold us responsible for these files, specifically the file of security and finance. For your information, we also offered something else to Brother Abu-Mazin. We told him that from the four ministries, you can also keep the foreign and information ministries. They want us to give up the finance and security file. They want us to give up the finance ministry which deals with money. We have seen how it used to be spent over the years. Our Palestinian people know about this and I am not going to review this file now. But it suffices for me to say that the European Union report that was submitted to the meeting of the donor countries in Amman some time ago mentioned that the financial administration during this period was the best financial administration since the Palestinian [National] Authority was established. There is transparency, honesty, protection of public funds. All this was mentioned.

Brothers, we and our Palestinian people are suffering in light of the issue of the salaries and other things. We, as ministers, have taken one or two grants only while some of the brother employees have taken nine grants. The brothers whose salaries are 1,500 shekels and less might have received their salary in full. As prime minister, I received only one or two grants. I am willing to remain four years as a servant of the sons of the Palestinian people without any remuneration. We are not thinking about such things. We found out that they had gone back on the agreements after his excellency the presi-

dent agreed to these principles and here is his signature.[Haniyah shows several papers]. Isma'il Haniyah and Dr Mustafa al-Barghuthi who was mediating also signed these documents. We have three signatures. This is the first time I show you this document. This is the first time anyone knows that there are signed minutes on the issue of the dialogue. We have shown you this document because we genuinely want to clarify certain facts that are related to this story. Therefore, I would like to emphasize some points. First, with respect to the issue of all the dialogue sessions, we have made concessions on positions and we have shown flexibility concerning the political programme. We demonstrated flexibility in the national accord document, then in the guidelines, and in the letter we exchanged with His Excellency the Qatari foreign minister. We demonstrated flexibility. Believe me, formulas were submitted and had we had accepted them we would have gone a long way and concluded an agreement a long time ago. But when the talk started to focus on the Quartet's conditions, everything stopped. I would like here to emphasize one point. Brother Abu-Mazin had the opportunity to form a national unity government. But he was determined - we ask God to forgive him and us - to appoint a certain person to the finance ministry. Brothers, this is why the recent dialogue for the formation of a national unity government failed.

Our brother, the president announced after this that the dialogue reached a dead end. We offered concessions concerning the person of the prime minister, the symbols, and the number of ministries. We expressed political flexibility and ceded two of the four ministries that are called as sovereign ministries. Therefore, we are absolutely not the ones who should be held responsible for the failure of this dialogue. The dialogue was suspended because of disagreement on only one ministry and in this manner. Another point is that it was said that we had set conditions for the formation of a national unity government. What are these conditions? They said that the brothers [in Hamas] wanted their people appointed as ambassadors and governors and that the issue for them was not just an issue of having ministers in the government. They added that this being the case, we would need to hold a dialogue for one or two years to discuss this issue. This talk is completely unfounded. We told Brother Abu-Mazin that we wanted to consolidate the political partnership in every walk of life like the embassies and not only in the government. Why should I not have people in the embassies? Am I not an important and ruling party and in the country now? I did not assume power on the back of a tank, through a military coup or by landing on the ground with a parachute. I assumed power through the ballot boxes. Why should this movement and the other factions not be represented in the embassies, or have governors? I spoke about the consolidation of the partnership. Therefore, I presented a concept in the presence of Brother President Abu-Mazin and the follow-up committee and said that we want to raise a slogan at this stage called stability within the framework of partnership. We will establish political stability through the implementation of this or that point. We will establish administrative stability by implementing the following one, two, or three points. The same will apply to security, judicial, and social stability. I raised this slogan, the slogan of stability within the framework of enhancement of partnership. Therefore, we did not propose to have ambassadors or governors as a condition for the formation of the national unity government. We said that we must first agree on the principle and then form a national unity government. After the government starts working, we will begin to implement what was agreed upon. We did not set as condition having our people in the embassies and as governors before the formation of the government. We just wanted to agree on the principle of partnership for this homeland is for all of us.

This is the country of all us. All sides have made sacrifices and we do not ask our people for privileges. Since this is the country of all, then let all participate in building it. Since all sides made sacrifices, then let all shoulder the responsibility for building the homeland. This is the point that I hope has now become clear. The second point is that they said that any person who comes from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] or from Hamas for example and is appointed as minister should not have anything to do with the DFLP or Hamas for as a minister he must not identify himself with this or that faction and that Hamas and the DFLP can say what they want but the ministers should act as ministers. I wonder here: How can the minister and the government not have anything to do with politics? If the Palestinian child dabbles in politics, how can his government not have anything to do with politics? When someone asks a minister about something, should he tell them go ask this or that faction for I am not involved. This is a government. Therefore, we have noted something important, even in the understanding we reached with Brother Abu-Mazin. We did so in

another joint minutes dated 8 November 2006. This is different from the first joint minutes. I noted at the end of the minutes that the government will enjoy all the powers that are stipulated in the basic law and that the government will exercise its political and administrative work as any other government.

Brother Abu-Mazin had put his signature to this. Four of us have signed these joint minutes, I, as well as the president, Dr Ziyad and Dr Mustafa signed them. This is not the way to do things. This is the government of the Palestinian people. This is a political not a municipal or technical issue. Therefore, the government and the ministers will certainly abide by the national accord programme on whose basis we formed the government. It was then said that the Palestinians do not want two heads in the country and do not want to establish two authorities in the country. I pose the following question here: When he held the [previous] elections, did Brother Abu-Mazin imagine or believe that the results of these elections will bring in the same party to the government that is already in the presidency, meaning that Fatah will assume power both in the government and the presidency? The elections were fair and produced these results. Another movement, the Hamas Movement, was brought to power. It had a programme and a concept and it was elected on this basis. It respects its programme and the Palestinian people who elected it. There is a contract between me and the voter. This is a trust. When the voter supported me, he told me: I entrust you to manage this programme in my place. How can I turn my back once I form a government after I am elected and betray the trust? This cannot be done. Therefore, there are programmes. In spite of this, we said that the relationship between us and Brother Abu-Mazin is a relationship that should first be governed by the constitution and the basic law. This is the first point. Second, it is a relationship of complementarity and cooperation that is governed by the Palestinian people's higher interests.

Brothers and sons of our people, you must believe me when I say that I indulged Brother Abu-Mazin a lot. Once he told me that the foreign, interior, and finance ministries are sovereign ministries and should be close to him. I told him: Brother Abu-Mazin, the line of communication is open between you and these ministers. You can meet with the foreign, finance, and interior ministers whenever you want for I have no problem with this. They now speak about two authorities. Before the elections, they used to say that there are two authorities and they continued to say so after the elections. What should we do and where should we go? Should we live on the moon? This is our country and they agreed to hold elections and there were the results of the ballot boxes. The world applauded these elections and praised them. The people had their say. Let us respect the people's decision.

There are also several other points. They said that no one should form axes and alliances. I wonder where these alliances are and who is meant by such talk? I would like to clarify our stand as government and movement too. First of all, our Arab and Muslim nation is our strategic depth and we do not give it up. We do not turn our backs to this nation. Second: We did not support one axis against another axis. But I will certainly work and cooperate with those who open their arms to me, open their door and welcome me and respect me, my people and the results of the elections. At the same time, we never interfered in the affairs of any Arab country and we are also not on the payroll of any party. Our decisions are made here and are based on our evaluation of our higher interests and the status of our Palestinian people.

The last point has to do with the political bomb that Brother Abu-Mazin hurled in stagnant waters, meaning the issue of early presidential and legislative elections. Actually, we want to clarify the following point: We consider this call as not being a constitutional call. We will brief the Palestinian people later about the constitutionality of this call. This call is absolutely unconstitutional. The second point is that they now rush to hold new elections while the Palestinian people have just emerged from the previous elections. Since the people are the source of all power, as many say, have the Palestinian people not been the source of power over 10 years? No elections were held for the Legislative Council for 10 years. Agreements were concluded and signed. Negotiations were held and people came and left. Where were the Palestinian people? Were they not the source of power?

Brother president Abu-Mazin: Why have you patiently waited for your government for 10 years and do not want to wait for this government to complete its constitutional term? If they respect the source of power, why did they attack the representatives of the people? We still remember the document

issued by 20 members, the document presented by members from the Legislative Council who called for reform only. They were attacked, beaten, and shot at while in their houses. Dr Mu'awiyah al-Masri still stands a witness to this. Or do we say that the people are the source of power whenever we want and forget about the people when we want? This is completely impermissible. I say that this call is not constitutional and will take us ten years back. From this premise, we affirm that we do not accept and reject this call and we emphasize the need to respect the Palestinian people's options. The government has been under attack to fail it from the very first day. By God, there has been no government on this earth that has experienced what we and our people have experienced. The Palestinian people are being punished in a collective manner for their options. Some spoke about smuggling - May God forgive you Brother Abu-Majid [not further identified]. Smuggling applies to those who take something outside the country. But when a respected minister crosses the border and the country through which he passes knows all about what he is carrying with him and when all that he has with him is registered and noted, this means that this minister brings in something to feed the sons of his people, alleviate the suffering and the tribulation.

As prime minister, I was forced to stay four or five hours seated on the road. It goes without saying that this has pained our people. But I accept to do this for the sake of this great people. I had with me a sum that does not exceed \$32 to 35 million. I brought this sum for our people before the blessed Id al-Adha to somewhat help the employees. We wanted to ease the tension because we know that part of this tension is caused by the embargo. We wanted to see our children smile, alleviate our wounds. But they did not allow this sum of money to enter the territories. We bring in money to feed the sons of the Palestinian people. All the documents showing the sums that all the brother ministers have brought in can be found in the archives of the finance ministry and every citizen can check these archives and see for himself about all the sums that have been brought in since we assumed power.

We will not discuss the last station, the station of the recent developments. The issue of the crossing and what took place in it. We regret to say that defenceless masses went out to welcome the prime minister. They carried nothing with them. They were shot at, beaten with bludgeons and sticks. When the people heard the news that the prime minister was deported, they took to the streets to express their rejection of the Israeli decision because it was said that the Israeli interior minister had decided to deport the prime minister. I do not want to discuss the crossing issue. I do not want to speak about myself. But I would like to say that our Palestinian people are a pure and honest people and are not thieves. They did not steal the rooms where people place their belongings for safe-keeping. We are proud of belonging to this people, this blessed and great people. This people who act like this and offer their blood in sacrifice are not a people who steal and are not thieves. I do not want to speak about the issue of the crossing, the exchange of fire, and what took place there. Some brothers described what took place as a theatrical show. Is it a theatrical show for me to kill my own son by opening fire directly on him? Is it a theatrical show for me to kill my personal guard who was close to me? Is it also part of the theatrical show when I sever the finger of my political adviser Dr Ahmad Yusuf? Is it also part of this theatrical show to injure the escort members of the secretary general [not further identified]? Well, some brother officials yesterday called me from abroad asking me how can a prime minister [walk on foot?] I told them that we are the prime minister of the Palestinian people who are in the alleys, streets, and in the refugee camps and we are part of this people and we stand to the side of our people. If our people sit on the ground, we sit with them. If they stand in line at the crossing, we will do the same thing. There is no problem. If others wish to leave in any other way, this is their own affair.

Let us discuss the recent painful, regrettable, and difficult incidents. I would like to emphasize one important point that of making decisions that are based on national accord. Brother Abu-Mazin - God forgive him - called for early elections in this way in the wake of painful incidents at the crossing and after a failed assassination attempt. Israeli officials expressed regret that the assassination attempt failed and this raises a question mark. An official spokesman for the US State Department also said that it was Brother Abu-Mazin who decided not to allow the funds to be brought in. This also raises a question mark. When there is pain, killings, and wounded and we make a speech the second or third day telling people that elections will be held, why this repression of the people's freedom? Let us

cater for the people's feelings. Let us take into consideration the people's circumstances. Why shoot at 41 worshippers who came out after Friday prayers to celebrate the anniversary of their movement? The window panes of the Al-Birah mosque, the Jamal Abd-al-Nasir mosque, have been shattered. Roadblocks were erected early in the morning on all the Ramallah roads to prevent this march. Do our Palestinian people in the West Bank need more road blocks? They have more than 175 Israeli road blocks. Of course they do not need more. Therefore, this is the result of seeking to take anything without national consensus. This is the result when the people are repressed and oppressed in this way. This is a painful result and no one is happy with it. I am not happy when I see my son, the son of the Hamas Movement fall as a martyr or is wounded or my son, the son of the Fatah Movement fall victim or is wounded. The same applies to my sons in the security agencies if they fall martyr or are wounded on Palestinian territory. This does not make me happy. No person who has a conscience will be happy too. Therefore, I valued and continue to value the arduous efforts that are being exerted to contain this crisis.

I value the efforts by our brothers in the Palestinian factions, our brothers in the Islamic Jihad, and in the two fronts [DFLP and PFLP] and the efforts by the Follow-up Committee and the understandings and agreement that were reached. I appreciate these efforts. I also value the Arab efforts, the efforts that the fraternal Egyptian security delegation that is present here is exerting. I also value the Arab and Muslim mediations, the contacts by His Highness Prince Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the amir of Qatar he held with me, with President Abu-Mazin. I also valued the phone calls by the brothers in Damascus, as well as the secretary general of the Organization of Islamic countries, who, I believe, has arrived here in Gaza. I hope to meet him after this event. There are also the contacts by the Arab League secretary-general. I received a call today from the Turkish foreign minister. There is also the call by His Majesty King Abdallah of Jordan. I welcome all these mediations.

I welcome all these efforts and I do not want to call them mediations because we are part of the Arab nation. Our wounds are yours and our pain is yours too. I know that the current moves stem from a sense of compassion for what is taking place in the occupied territories. This is why I would like to affirm the following at the end of my address to our Palestinian people:

First: The need to safeguard national unity in and outside the territories. We are one people and the six million Palestinians in the Diaspora are an indivisible part of this great people. I cannot give up their right to repatriation for this is a sacred right. I cannot give up their right to speak and express their opinion. They have not trodden the soil of the homeland because there is an occupation that bans them from returning to their homeland. But our people abroad have also suffered from the massacres and all the harsh circumstances over decades. These are a people who have a right to speak and express their opinion. We do not support the idea of cancelling the refugees and the Palestinians in the Diaspora. This is why we in and outside the territories are one people that stand as a barrier to protect our cause.

From this premise, I emphasize the need for national unity. Young men from Hamas and Fatah in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, this is not your battle. This is not the place for your bullets. This pure blood is dear to us. Preserve your unity and cohesion.

Second: I would like to affirm that dialogue is of utmost priority. We must not resort to weapons and I call on everybody to exercise self-restraint and I appeal to all to remain calm, ease tension and end the armed manifestations that exacerbate tension. The language of dialogue must prevail among us. We are not enemies. We have political disagreements and we have political bickering but we must not drown in the Israeli-American scheme. Our strategy, brothers, should remain as it is; the major contradiction is with the occupation.

Fourth [as heard]: I would like to emphasize the need to respect the results of the elections and deal with them. This is a focal point. We must respect the results of the elections and deal with them practically, on the ground, and effectively.

Fifth: National accord is the basis that solves any problem within any framework.

Sixth: We continue to support the formation of a national unity government on the basis of the national accord document, a government that is home-grown and that has a national concept and should be formed on national bases. If this government will not be able to lift the embargo, then let it a government to confront the embargo. Let us confront the embargo united.

From this premise, I value the stand of the 10 Palestinian factions that met in Damascus in the presence of Mr Faruq Qaddumi. These factions reiterated their rejection of the early elections and their commitment to the national unity government on the basis of the national unity document. We support this national consensus and we will not depart from this consensus.

Seventh: I call as of now for the return of all those who have been kidnapped and who are being held by the brothers in Hamas or Fatah. Return your brothers and do not keep any kidnapped person with you. These are our young men and our kinfolk and we are one family. I hope that all the kidnapped from this or that side will be immediately returned.

Ninth [as heard]: I call on the interior minister to hold a meeting immediately with the security agencies tonight to adopt a common step to contain tension, appease the situation, and withdraw armed manifestations and keep in the arena only the people who are responsible for domestic security. I invite the interior minister to hold a meeting with the security agencies and the heads of the security agencies. Sit together, discuss the situation, and take the necessary arrangements, calm the situation, end the causes of tension, and follow up on all the incidents. Form investigation and judicial committees as the government decided in its recent meeting. The issue of the three children, may God have them rest in peace, is the first issue that you must tackle. Before discussing my case at the crossing, you must start with the issue of the three children.

We do not want to carry out one-upmanship over this issue because they are our children and you must arrest anyone who is responsible for killing these children. I phoned Brother Baha Ba'lushah from Khartoum and offered him my condolences. I told him and this is what I did not mention in the media that your children are our children and your blood is our blood and we are responsible for following up and exposing this crime. We also have no objection to forming a joint operations room for all the agencies. I wish that the interior minister will do this immediately.

In conclusion, I call on all our Palestinian people to achieve a comprehensive national reconciliation to protect civil peace and amity. I invite you for a comprehensive national reconciliation in the cities, the camps, the villages and I am ready in the name of the Palestinian government to pay any blood money for the families of all the martyrs to achieve comprehensive national reconciliation. I am ready and I address my appeal to all the good people and notables in our country from here to move on all levels, on the level of Shari'a [Islamic law] or customary law. We are ready as a government to support this national reconciliation and are ready to pay all the blood money needed, regardless of their amounts to stop the shedding of the blood of our people and nation and to keep this cause, God willing, a just and clear cause and the cause of the entire nation.

Brothers, I sensed from my tour that the entire nation supports the Palestinian people and it is not an illusion that the embargo will be broken. This is not just an illusion. The embargo will be broken and will be dismantled. This is not an illusion. The moves that are taking place in the region and within the nation show that our nation fares well and our people and kinfolk are doing well. I ask almighty God to avert our people all covert and overt seditions. Our hearts beat for Jerusalem and the kinfolk of Jerusalem. Our hearts beat for the West Bank and for our people in the territories that were occupied in 1948, for our people in the Diaspora and our people here in Gaza, the city of steadfastness, heroism, and greatness, the Gaza of the chivalrous people. Let us remain along this course.

May God guide your steps and we ask God to preserve our people, unity, and cause and may God's peace and blessings be upon you.



**STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET,
WASHINGTON, DC, 22 DECEMBER 2006**

Recalling its previous statements of June 17, 2006 and September 20, 2006, taking into account the need for the Palestinian Authority government to respond to the January 30, 2006 Quartet principles, and mindful of the continuing needs of the Palestinian people, the Quartet endorsed the continuation of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) for a three-month period, and agreed to again review the need for such a mechanism at the end of that time.

The Quartet commended the efforts of the World Bank and European Union to facilitate needs-based assistance directly to the Palestinian people via the TIM. Donors are also encouraged to respond to humanitarian and other assistance requests by international organizations, especially UN agencies, active in the West Bank and Gaza.



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS AT A JOINT PRESS BRIEFING WITH
PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, RAMALLAH, 19 JANUARY 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

[Solana's Middle East tour also included stops in Egypt, Israel, and Jordan.]

Thank you very much, Mr President. It is a great pleasure to be here again. I have come here to see the President and to present to him the wish and the plan of the European Union to revitalize the peace process. It will not be easy but I believe that there is a real opportunity.

Things look better than they did when I last came here at the beginning of December. President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert have met. The transfer of a large sum of the Palestinian owned tax revenue is an important decision. I welcome this good news, and I am sure it will help the Palestinians.

More steps have to follow to make life better again for the Palestinians. Moreover, a political process has to be opened. It is fundamental to define parameters for ending the occupation that began in 1967. There is a real opportunity.

Owing to his position as Chairman of the PLO, President Abbas is in charge of the talks that are going to be held. The meeting of the Quartet that we are going to have on 2 February in Washington will be instrumental in defining the framework for a political process. But, also, all efforts have to be intensified to make living conditions better again for the Palestinians.

All the numerous meetings that President Abbas holds follow this goal - the benefit of the Palestinian people. We are calling for unity among Palestinians. We welcome the efforts of the Palestinian President to form a national unity government that we can re-engage with. It is important to uphold the principles President Abbas has set out for the formation of such a government. President Abbas has always defended the same, clear position, which is supported by the international community. The unity of the Palestinians is very important. Violence between the factions should not be allowed to occur.

Mr President, I would like to underline again that you can always count on the European Union in your endeavours.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST,
2776TH COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 22 JANUARY 2007**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- Middle East Peace Process

1. The Council expresses its full support for President Abbas and his continued efforts for national unity. It calls on all Palestinians to support these efforts and to end internal violence. The EU stands ready to work with a legitimate Palestinian government that adopts a platform reflecting the Quartet principles.
2. The Council welcomes the meeting between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas on 23 December 2006 and emphasises the need for prompt implementation of commitments made at this meeting. It takes note of the partial transfer by Israel of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. It calls for the early resumption of the 2005 Sharm el-Sheikh understandings. The Council expresses the hope that this meeting will be the first in a series of meetings in the framework of a renewed political process, which should lead to meaningful negotiations on the final status. The ultimate goal should be an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security.
3. The Council calls on the parties to consolidate the cease-fire in Gaza and to extend it to the West Bank. It condemns the continued firing of rockets into Israeli territory and urges the Palestinian leadership to do everything in its power to put an end to such acts. While commending Israel for its present restraint concerning Gaza, it calls for an end to Israeli military interventions in the West Bank.
4. The EU calls for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier and commends efforts, including by partners in the region, to that effect. It also calls for the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators detained in Israel.
5. The EU stresses the importance of strengthening the Palestinian institutions. It will continue to pursue practical and visible measures, including on access and movement, governance, the security sector and a functioning administration. It welcomes the extension of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) for three months, which – in coordination with the Office of the President – is providing essential relief to a large part of the Palestinian population. It reiterates its call on Israel for the immediate transfer of all withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. It encourages Israel to consider to do so through the TIM. The Council recalls the utmost importance of the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access and in this regard reiterates its continued commitment to the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah. It urges that Rafah and all other crossing points, notably Karni, be re-opened and remain open.
6. The EU is deeply concerned about the recent authorisation of settlement activities by the Israeli government, and the ongoing construction of the barrier on Palestinian land. These developments are contrary to international law and the Road Map. The Council calls on Israel to desist from any action that threatens the viability of an agreed two-state solution. Settlement activities in and around East-Jerusalem as well as in the Jordan valley are of particular concern. The EU will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties.
7. In this context, the EU emphasises its determination to play an active role in the framework of increased Quartet engagement, with a view to urgently put in place a political and diplomatic process offering a political perspective in the quest for a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict, in line with the Road Map and the relevant UNSC resolutions, and also taking into account the Arab League Beirut Declaration. The Council underlines the need to work closely with the parties and regional partners. In accordance with the Road Map, the Quartet, in consultation with the parties, should in due course convene an international conference to realise these goals. At this critical moment, the Council looks forward to an early meeting of Quartet principals.



**STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET,
WASHINGTON, DC, 2 FEBRUARY 2007**

The Quartet Principals - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. 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 - met today in Washington to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

The Quartet welcomed UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the representative of the EU Presidency, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Recognizing the critical need to end the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, which would contribute to security and stability in the region, the Quartet pledged to support efforts to put in place a process with the goal of ending the occupation that began in 1967 and creating an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel, and reaffirmed its commitment to a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace based on UNSCRs 242 and 338.

The Quartet expressed the hope that the result-oriented dialogue initiated between Israeli and Palestinian leaders will continue in the framework of a renewed political process with the aim of launching meaningful negotiations.

The Quartet undertook to give active follow-up to these meetings and to remain closely engaged at this moment of increased activity and dialogue.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to meet regularly at both the principals and envoys level according to an agreed calendar, including with the parties and other regional partners, to monitor developments and actions taken by the parties and to discuss the way ahead.

The Quartet noted its support for renewed dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders and welcomed the December 23 meeting between Israeli PM Olmert and PA President Abbas, and the subsequent implementation of some steps discussed at that meeting. The Quartet urged the parties to implement fully steps discussed at the December 23 meeting, to refrain from taking any measures that could predetermine the number of issues that will be resolved in negotiations, to meet their respective obligations under phase one of the Roadmap and under the Agreement on Movement and Access, and to seek to fulfill their obligations under the Sharm el-Sheikh Understandings of 2005.

The Quartet discussed U.S. efforts to facilitate discussions between the parties. The Quartet welcomed the upcoming meeting between Prime Minister Olmert, President Abbas, and Secretary of State Rice, that could begin to define more clearly the political horizon for the Palestinian people, and help engender a sense of partnership. The Quartet affirmed the primacy of the Roadmap, and welcomed U.S. efforts to accelerate progress on the Roadmap.

The Quartet noted the continuing importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, particularly its reflection of a shared commitment to a two-state solution.

The Quartet reiterated its call for an immediate and unconditional end to all acts of violence and terror. It condemned the suicide bombing in Eilat on 29 January and called once again for an immediate end to all rocket attacks against Israel.

The Quartet expressed its deep concern at the violence among Palestinians and called for respect for law and order.

The Quartet called for continued international assistance to the Palestinian people, and encouraged donors to focus on preserving and building the capacity of institutions of Palestinian governance as well as the development of the Palestinian economy. The Quartet welcomed international efforts to

reform the Palestinian security sector and thus to help improve law and order for the Palestinian people. It called for the Temporary International Mechanism to be further developed to support the political process, to identify suitable projects for international support in the areas of governance, institution building and economic development, and urged other members of the international community to consider practical support to the parties.

The Quartet called for Palestinian unity in support of a government committed to nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. The Quartet reaffirmed that these principles endure. The Quartet reiterated its call for the PA government to commit to these principles.



MECCA ACCORD BETWEEN HAMAS AND FATEH, MECCA, 8 FEBRUARY 2007

Based on the generous initiative announced by Saudi King Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz and under the sponsorship of his majesty, Fatah and Hamas Movements held in the period February 6-8, 2007 in Holy Mecca the dialogues of Palestinian conciliation and agreement and these dialogues, thanks to God, ended with success and an agreement was reached on the following:

First: to stress on banning the shedding of the Palestinian blood and to take all measures and arrangements to prevent the shedding of the Palestinian blood and to stress on the importance of national unity as basis for national steadfastness and confronting the occupation and to achieve the legitimate national goals of the Palestinian people and adopt the language of dialogue as the sole basis for solving the political disagreements on the Palestinian arena.

Within this context, we offer gratitude to the brothers in Egypt and the Egyptian security delegation in Gaza who exerted tremendous efforts to calm the conditions in Gaza Strip in the past period.

Second: Final agreement to form a Palestinian national unity government according to a detailed agreement ratified by both sides and to start on an urgent basis to take the constitutional measures to form this government.

Third: to move ahead in measures to activate and reform the PLO and accelerate the work of the preparatory committee based on the Cairo and Damascus Understandings.

It has been agreed also on detailed steps between both sides on this issue.

Fourth: to stress on the principle of political partnership on the basis of the effective laws in the PNA and on the basis of political pluralism according to an agreement ratified between both parties.

We gladly announce this agreement to our Palestinian masses and to the Arab and Islamic nation and to all our friends in the world. We stress on our commitment to this agreement in text and spirit so that we can devote our time to achieve our national goals and get rid of the occupation and regain our rights and devote work to the main files, mainly Jerusalem, the refugees, the Aqsa Mosque, the prisoners and detainees and to confront the wall and settlements.



MECCA ACCORD BETWEEN HAMAS AND FATEH – MESSAGE OF PRESIDENT ABBAS TO PRIME MINISTER HANIYEH, MECCA, 8 FEBRUARY 2007

Mr. Ismail Abdul Salam Hanieh,
Greetings!

In my capacity as the head of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the President of the Palestinian Authority and after reviewing the Basic Law and based on the authorities vested in us:

- a) I designate you to form the upcoming Palestinian government within the time specified under the Basic Law (five weeks.)
- b) After forming the government and presenting it to us, it should be presented to the Palestinian Legislative Council for a vote of confidence.
- c) I call upon you as the head of the upcoming Palestinian government to commit to the higher interests of the Palestinian people, to preserve its rights and to preserve its achievements and to develop them, and to work in order to achieve its national goals as was approved by the Palestine National Council, the clauses of the Basic Law and the National Reconciliation Document and the Arab summits resolutions.

Based on this, I call upon you to respect the Arab and international resolutions and the agreements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization [referring to peace accords with Israel].

May God help you in your steps and duties.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, 9 FEBRUARY 2007

The Quartet Principals – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. 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 February 2 regarding its support for a Palestinian government committed to nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap.

Quartet members will meet February 21 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 February 19 trilateral meeting between U.S. 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 February 21 meeting.



EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, 2780TH COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 12 FEBRUARY 2007 [EXCERPTS]

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

The Council welcomed the fact that an agreement has been reached in Mecca on 8 February on the formation of a Palestinian national unity government. It paid tribute to the sustained efforts of President Abbas to form a government of national unity and expressed its appreciation for the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Arab leaders in bringing about Palestinian reconciliation. The EU

stands ready to work with a legitimate Palestinian government that adopts a platform reflecting the Quartet principles and welcomed the Quartet statement of 9 February.

The Council also welcomed the statement by the Quartet at its meeting in Washington on 2 February, in particular its intention to give active follow-up to meetings between Israeli and Palestinian leaders and to remain closely engaged at this moment of increased activity and dialogue.

The Council looks forward to early and regular meetings of the Quartet at Principals' and envoys' level on the basis of an agreed calendar, including meetings with the parties and other regional parties. It welcomes the Quartet's commitment to monitor developments and actions taken by the parties and to discuss the way ahead.

The Council expressed its full support for the forthcoming meeting between Prime Minister Olmert, President Abbas and Secretary of State Rice, and encouraged the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to launch a process with the goal of ending the occupation that began in 1967 and creating an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel.

The Council looks forward to the next Quartet meeting at Principals' level on 21 February in Berlin to further discuss the way forward.

Reiterating its position, as set out in the European Council Declaration of 14 and 15 December 2006 and the General Affairs and External Relations Council Conclusions of 22 January 2007, the EU underlines its determination to pursue its practical measures and to continue playing an active political role, notably in the framework of increased Quartet engagement.



**LETTERS OF RESIGNATION AND COMMISSIONING EXCHANGED BETWEEN
PRIME MINISTER ISMAIL HANIYEH AND PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS
FOLLOWING THE MECCA ACCORD, GAZA, 15-16 FEBRUARY 2007**

RESIGNATION LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER HANIYEH TO PRESIDENT ABBAS,
15 FEBRUARY 2007:

Mr. President Abu Mazen, may God protect him, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and President of the PNA, Peace be upon you,

I am pleased to express to you my gratitude and the gratitude of the government for your trust and confidence in us in forming the tenth government which preserved the rights and the higher interests of the Palestinian people; despite the difficulty conditions and the oppressive siege and based on the Mecca Agreement that was signed between Fatah and Hamas Movements under the patronage of King Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, the King of Saudi Arabia, on February 8, 2007 - Muharram 21, 1428 Hijri - which stipulated the formation of the next Palestinian government "the national unity government", and in my capacity as the current PM of the tenth Palestinian government, I submit my resignation in order to start the constitutional measures to form the 11th unity government.

I pray to God to help the Palestinian people achieve their aspirations in terms of freedom, return and independence, and we salute the martyrs and we wish fast recovery for the injured and we wish the release of the heroic prisoners soon and accept our best regards.

Your brother Ismail Hanieh, the Palestinian PM,
Muharram 27, 1428 Hijri / February 15, 2007

LETTER OF COMMISSIONING FROM PRESIDENT ABBAS TO PRIME MINISTER HANIYEH,
15 FEBRUARY 2007:

Based on the authorities vested in us and towards achieving the public interest, we issued the following:

First Article: Accepting the resignation of Mr. PM Ismail Hanieh.

Second Article: The resigning PM and the members of his government shall exercise on a temporary basis their works as a caretaker government until the formation of the new government.

Third Article: Mr. Ismail Hanieh shall be selected to form the national unity government.

Fourth Article: All competent parties each within its jurisdictions shall implement the provisions of this decree which shall be effective as of the date of its issuance and shall be published in the official gazette

ANNEX TO THE LETTER OF COMMISSIONING, 16 FEBRUARY 2007

First Article: We commission you to form the next government within the period set in the Basic Law which are three weeks with an additional period of two weeks.

Second Article: After concluding the steps to form the government and presenting it to us, it will be presented to the PLC to get the vote of confidence.

Third Article: We call upon you as PM of the next government to abide by the higher interests of the Palestinian people and preserve their rights and maintain their accomplishments and develop them and work on achieving their national goals as ratified by the Palestinian National Council resolutions and the articles of the Basic Law and the National Conciliation Document and the Arab Summits resolutions.

Based on this, I call upon to respect the international legitimacy resolutions and the agreements signed by the PLO.

May God bless you and guide your steps for the good value.



**ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER TZIPI LIVNI, REMARKS AFTER MEETING US
SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, JERUSALEM, 17 FEBRUARY 2007**

Yes, hello. It's a pleasure to welcome Secretary Rice to Israel. This meeting - we're going to have a meeting which will be more of a preparatory meeting before the trilateral summit this week. This is a very sensitive point in time after the agreements between the Fatah and Hamas. Unfortunate and before the formation of the future Palestinian government, the understandings doesn't meet the requirements of the international community. It is crucial to understand that Israel with the international community expects any Palestinian government to meet these requirements fully and completely. These requirements are not obstacle for peace, but they are the basic conditions and foundation for any kind of - for the vision of two-state solution.

I think that also the moderates in the Palestinian side need to understand that the path toward a Palestinian state goes through renunciation of violence and terrorism and not by compromising with terror.

So we are going to discuss all these matters and next week we are going to - this is going to be part of the trilateral meeting next week.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS AFTER MEETING
ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER TZIPI LIVNI, JERUSALEM, 17 FEBRUARY 2007**

Well, thank you very much for welcoming me again to Israel. I look very much forward to our dinner tonight and we will have a chance to have preparatory talks in advance of both my bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Olmert tomorrow and then also the trilateral meeting. And I look forward to that meeting. As I have said, it is, in fact, a complicated time because we are between the announcement of the intention to form a government and the actual formation of the government. The Quartet has, of course, reiterated the importance of its principles because they are foundational principles for peace. It only makes sense that you have to renounce violence. It only makes sense that you have to recognize the right of your partner to exist and to respect international agreements. And so those principles remain the foundational principles for the formation of two states and, in fact, for the formation of leadership that can lead to that two-state solution.

We, of course, have said that we will await the formation of the government before making any decisions about it, and I think that is generally the view that is held in the international community as a whole. But I have said that if one waited for the perfect time to come to the Middle East, perhaps you wouldn't get on an airplane; and so despite the complications, it's an important time to have these discussions, it's an important time to talk about how we advance the vision of two states living side by side in peace and in freedom. And I look forward to exploring, probing the political horizon with Prime Minister Olmert and with President Abbas.

And so thank you very much for welcoming me here and I look forward to dinner tonight.



**PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, REMARKS AFTER MEETING US
SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, RAMALLAH, 18 FEBRUARY 2007**

As usual, I would like to welcome very much Dr. Rice. She is visiting us these days. As usual, we always maintain a direct contact with her either through visits or by phone calls.

And as you all know, she said during her last visit that I will be back in three weeks, and sure enough in three weeks she is back in order to discuss very important political issues that are taking place these days.

And among the most prominent issues that we will be discussing today, the upcoming trilateral meeting that will take place tomorrow with Mr. Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister. In that meeting, we will be exploring the political horizon, we will be discussing the Israeli-Palestinian issues, and most importantly we will be discussing issues of peace between the two parties.

And of course, we will also be discussing the Mecca agreement, that agreement that took place in the Holy Land of Mecca under the sponsorship of His Majesty, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz. And there will be other additional details that will be the subject of our conversations today.

At the end, I would like once again to express my admiration for the activities of Secretary of State Rice and I would like to take this opportunity to convey my warmest regard to President Bush and his interest in Middle East issues as well as our issues and peace in the region.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS AFTER MEETING
PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, RAMALLAH, 18 FEBRUARY 2007**

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for welcoming me here yet again and for offering me lunch yet again. I look forward to it very much. (Laughter.)

We are here to discuss issues of Palestinian life and issues of peace. And it is, of course, an interesting, even complicated time. And I have been saying, Mr. President, that a number of people said it's a complicated time and I said that if I waited for an uncomplicated time to come to the Middle East, perhaps I would never get on the airplane. (Laughter.)

So I look very much forward to discussing the current situation with you, hearing more about your discussions in Saudi Arabia. I look forward to discussing with you the trilateral that we will have with Prime Minister Olmert tomorrow. I hope that this meeting with the three of us will be an opportunity to examine the current situation, to commit to - recommit to existing agreements, but also to begin to explore and probe the political and diplomatic horizon. And I very much look forward to that meeting.

I want to thank you for your personal commitment to peace, a commitment that is longstanding and that has led the Palestinian people to international agreements that recognize the importance of the two-state solution and all that goes with it. And so I look forward to working with you and I look forward to our discussions today and tomorrow.



**JOINT STATEMENT OF US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE,
PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS AND PRIME MINISTER
EHUD OLMERT AFTER MEETING IN JERUSALEM, 19 FEBRUARY 2007**

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert met today, February 19. It was a useful and productive meeting.

The leaders affirmed their commitment to a two-state solution, agreed that a Palestinian state cannot be born of violence and terror, and reiterated their acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap.

The President and the Prime Minister discussed how to move forward on mutual obligations in the Roadmap in regard to the implementation of Phase I.

The participants called for respecting the ceasefire declared in November.

The President and the Prime Minister also discussed issues arising from the agreement for a Palestinian national unity government, and the position of the Quartet that any Palestinian Authority government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including regarding the Roadmap.

The President and the Prime Minister discussed their views of the diplomatic and political horizon and how it might unfold toward the two state vision of President Bush.

The President and the Prime Minister agreed that they would meet together again soon. They reiterated their desire for American participation and leadership in facilitating efforts to overcome obstacles, rally regional and international support, and move forward toward peace.

In that vein, Secretary Rice expects to return soon.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, BERLIN, 21 FEBRUARY 2007

The Quartet Principals – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. 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 – met today in Berlin to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

Secretary Rice reported on her recent February 18 meetings with PM Olmert and President Abbas, the February 19 trilateral and U.S. efforts to facilitate discussions between the parties. The Quartet welcomed these efforts and expressed the hope that the result-oriented dialogue initiated between Israeli and Palestinian leaders will continue in the framework of a renewed political process, with the aim of defining more clearly the political horizon and launching meaningful negotiations. The Quartet reaffirmed its determination to promote such a process, in cooperation with the parties and other regional partners. The Quartet urged the parties to refrain from measures that prejudice issues to be resolved in negotiations.

The Quartet reaffirmed its statements regarding its support for a Palestinian government committed to nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap, and encouraged progress in this direction.

The Quartet discussed efforts underway for a Palestinian national unity government, pursuant to the agreement reached in Mecca on February 8. The Quartet expressed its appreciation for the role of King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia and the cessation of violence among Palestinians.

The Quartet concluded with a discussion of possible further steps by the international community in the context of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

It welcomed preliminary ideas put forward by the European Commission to meet the need to better coordinate and mobilize international assistance in support of the political process and to meet the needs of the Palestinian people.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to meet regularly and asked envoys to monitor developments and actions taken by the parties and to discuss the way ahead. It was agreed to schedule a meeting in the region soon.



**FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE EXPANDED EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT THE LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS
ON THE ISRAELI AGGRESSIONS AGAINST AL-AQSA MOSQUE,
JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA, 22 FEBRUARY 2007**

The Expanded Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee held in Jeddah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 22 February 2007, corresponding to 4 Safar 1428H,

Having considered the Secretary-General's report,

Proceeding from the principles and goals of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference,

Referring to the Islamic resolutions which affirm that the cause of Al Quds Al Sharif constitutes the essence of the cause of Palestine, Muslims' first cause;

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, particularly resolutions 465, 476 and 478;

Affirming the United Nations Security Council resolution 681 which provided for the applicability of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the occupied Palestinian territories, including the occupied city of Al Quds:

Acknowledging the urgent appeal made to the meeting by the Mufti of Al-Quds who affirmed the seriousness of the situation which threatens the Al-Aqsa Mosque. He also appealed to the Ummah to exert its utmost efforts to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Mufti expressed his confidence that the meeting would examine various ways and means to face this serious challenge which is not only a flagrant violation but also a threat to Islamic civilization:

1. *Expresses* its grave concern over the escalating Israeli aggression against the holy sites in Al Quds Al Sharif, and particularly in the immediate vicinity of the Holy Aqsa Mosque.
2. *Affirms* its condemnation of the works and excavations carried out by Israel, “the occupying power”, that threaten the Holy Al Aqsa Mosque and its surrounding area, which is considered an affront to Muslims’ sentiments and of one of their most important sanctities; and demands that all these works and excavations be ceased immediately.
3. *Affirms* that Al Quds Al Sharif is an integral part of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and, as such, is subject to the same provisions as all occupied Palestinian territories in accordance with the resolutions of the international legitimacy.
4. *Affirms* that the grave violations committed by the occupying power in Al Quds, including the construction of a synagogue in the vicinity of Al Aqsa Mosque and a Jewish museum, the project of a railroad line linking occupied Arab Jerusalem with the settlements, the persisting settlement activity inside Al Quds, isolation of the City with an Apartheid wall to Judaize it, are aggressive and illegal practices that constitute a flagrant violation of the international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention; and demands the UN Security Council to intervene to take the necessary measures to protect Al Aqsa Mosque and compel Israel to implement the resolutions of the international legitimacy on Al Quds, including in particular resolutions 253, 267, 271, 465, 476, 478, 6725, 1073, and General Assembly resolution 223/51.
5. *Welcomes and supports* the Makkah Al Mukarramah Agreement of Palestinian national reconciliation, *commends* the sponsorship and praiseworthy efforts put in by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and *requests* the international community to support the agreement. It *welcomes* the efforts aimed at forming the Palestinian national unity government and *undertakes* to support it for its significance for steadfastness of the Palestinian people and supporting its resistance ability until just and comprehensive peace is achieved.
6. *Confirms* the need to abide by the resolution to break the unjust embargo imposed on the Palestinian people adopted by the Executive Committee in its Expanded Extraordinary Meeting held on 18 November 2006, and calls for urgent action with the international community to lift the embargo in the light of positive developments on the Palestinian scene.
7. *Calls upon* the Ummah to unify its efforts in order to defend its sanctities and resist all attempts aimed at weakening its causes and spreading sectarian and religious differences amongst and within the Islamic countries.
8. *Calls on* the Member States to provide financial and moral support to the population of Al Quds and its Palestinian institutions in support for their steadfastness and the preservation of the Islamic and Arab identity as well as the religious, historical and demographic character of Al Quds.
9. *Calls also on* the international community, the Quartet in particular, to put pressure on Israel to immediately end its aggression against Al Aqsa Mosque and cease all its measures that would lead to more tension and violence, constituting a threat to international peace and security at a time when serious efforts are needed to achieve comprehensive peace and stability in the Middle East.
10. *Requests* the General Secretariat to follow the implementation of the international decisions and resolutions adopted in this regard, especially the decision adopted by the 30th Session of the World Heritage Committee held in July 2006, in Lithuania which was approved by all UNESCO Member States, including Israel, that Israel should provide to the World Heritage Centre all relevant information concerning its plans for new buildings and reconstruction of the access leading to Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque.

11. *Calls upon* the Member States to provide advisory and technical support to the Endowment Department in Al-Quds, as required by Palestine.
12. *Calls on* the General Secretariat and the Member States to organize activities which include all segments of the society to highlight the cause of Al Quds Al Sharif and Palestine and expose the dangerous violations and illegal measures carried out by the Israeli occupation authorities, particularly the excavation works it is carrying out underneath and in the immediate vicinity of the Holy Al Aqsa Mosque.
13. *Mandates* the OIC Group in New York to follow up on its request to the UN Security Council to take the necessary measures to end the serious violations against the Holy Al Aqsa Mosque.
14. *Requests* the OIC Group in UNESCO to continue to urge this Organization to fulfill its responsibilities and take the necessary measures to preserve the human and civilizational heritage of Al Quds, including the formation of a committee to investigate the Israeli aggressions against the Holy Al Aqsa Mosque, and to prevent it from tampering with the historical and civilizational character as well as the Islamic and Arab identity of the Holy City.
15. *Commends* the continuous efforts, including regional and international contacts, made by His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, to urge the international community to compel Israel to abide by all relevant UN resolutions.
16. *Calls on* the Member States and the civil society institutions to support Bayt Mal Al-Quds and Al-Quds Fund Waqf in order to allow them to energize their humanitarian action and preserve the sanctities in Al-Quds.
17. *Appreciates* the efforts exerted by the Chairman of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference, the Chairman of the 33rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers and Member States to safeguard and protect the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque.
18. *Appreciates also* the efforts of the Secretary General, especially his contacts and visit to Palestine aiming to urge the Palestinian parties to preserve national unity through dialogue. *Also supports* his efforts to end aggression against the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque.
19. *Welcomes and supports* the resolutions adopted by the Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Al Quds, which held its latest session in Kuala Lumpur on 15-16 February 2007.
20. *Affirms* the necessity of launching an international campaign to elucidate the dangers threatening Al Aqsa Mosque and the sanctuaries in Al Quds, and the serious implications on security and stability in the region and beyond, and demands that pressure be put on Israel to end its violations and aggression.
21. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Chairman of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference that the Secretary General coordinates a concrete plan of action to take up the Al-Aqsa and the Al-Quds issues to the Security Council, UNESCO, International Court of Justice and the Human Rights Council.
22. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Chairs of the Islamic Summit Conference and the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, and Palestine to take the necessary measures to implement the provisions of this Communiqué.



**SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE,
EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU, SPEECH AT THE EXPANDED EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE ISRAELI ASSAULTS ON AL-AQSA
MOSQUE, HEADQUARTERS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT,
JEDDAH, 22 FEBRUARY 2007**

Bismillahi Arrahmani Arrahimi,

Your Excellencies the Foreign Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,
Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh!

I have the honor to welcome you all, with all due reverence and deep appreciation for your acceptance of the invitation to participate in this meeting in order to consider the heinous aggressions being perpetrated by Israel against the first Muslim Qibla and the site of Prophet Mohamed's Miraculous Ascension (PBUH). Indeed, the Israeli occupation forces have persisted in their violations of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention and in assaulting the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque all the time paying no regard for the feelings, sentiments, and beliefs of Muslims.

At the outset, I would like to start with a fresh reminder that the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque was the main catalyst for the very creation of this organization more than thirty seven years ago. Al-Quds was then our organization's first and foremost cause, its very "raison d'être", and has, ever since then and for all these years, been the highest item on its agenda. The defense of Al-Quds' mosques, the safeguarding of its holy places and shrines, the preservation of its Arab-Islamic identity and its historical, cultural, and civilizational landmarks, as well as the staunch campaign to ensure its return to Palestinian sovereignty have, therefore, always been and should always be the proactive objectives inspiring and propelling our endeavors forward, particularly in view of Israel's doggedly determined policies to tighten its stranglehold on, and, eventually, accomplish its designs to Judaize this Holy City.

Israel's recent and gravely miscalculated adventure of pushing ahead with its excavations at Al-Magha-riba Gate, just at the perimeter of Al-Aqsa mosque, is a dangerous breach of international law, which prohibits an occupying state from altering the natural, demographic, or civilizational landmarks of the territories under its occupation. What's more, these excavations constitute a brazen assault on the sanctities of Muslims and an offensive desecration of one of their holiest shrines, which calls for no less than an effective, collective Muslim stand to stop it dead in its tracks and prevent any repeat performance.

To make matters worse, the attacks on Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque constitute also the plunder and pillage of humanity's cultural and civilizational heritage, which is why I continue to be struck with bewilderment at the deafening silence of the international community vis-à-vis these Israeli assaults even as, in the past, this same international community not only instantly sprang to the rescue of other faiths' sacred icons and shrines but also found the way to take decisive action to prevent attacks on the human cultural and civilizational heritage when they happened to take place elsewhere around the world. Such examples abound and are simply too many to count, but one such striking examples was when UNESCO created raised such pandemonium at the destruction of the Buddhist statues in Afghanistan. Yet, and by the same token, should this naked aggression on the sacred sanctities of one and a half billion Muslims not be received with exactly the same uproar by the international community and its institutions?

That is why I would like to address an appeal from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to the whole world: Al-Quds is an occupied Holy City which must be returned to its rightful Palestinian owners; Al-Quds' authentic identity as a treasure trove of the world heritage; Al-Quds, the meeting point of divine monotheistic religions; Al-Quds the prayer Qibla and pilgrimage destination of all these faiths - must be preserved as such.

Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Israel has just been maneuvering to deceive the world by claiming that it has stopped the digging works, which it is carrying in the vicinity of Al-Maghariba Gate. This is simply not true, as the excavations have been well under way and continue unabashed. What has happened now is just a temporary suspension of the bridge construction works, which Israel is bent on building right in the middle of the excavation areas. We should therefore come wide awake to this stratagem and forge ahead with our efforts and pressure to prevent the digging from resuming.

In this regard, I am here to affirm that these excavations are not just an isolated case but the harbinger of a decades-long, systematic, and persistent Israeli policy designed to Judaize the City of Al-Quds, butcher its identity, and falsify its history. The sheer magnitude of the violations being suffered by Al-

Quds and its sacred icons is beyond measure and is so serious that it should make all of us fear to wake up one morning only to find Al-Aqsa totally collapsed by dint of Israel's digging. That is no exaggeration, as the Israeli assaults have exceeded all possible bounds and require top emergency response initiatives.

At this point I would like to caution that, despite the major role we are in a position to play on the international political stage, the preservation of the city of Al-Quds calls for synchronous efforts of a special kind; efforts having to do with the nature of action in Al-Quds itself. There, the facts have proved that the biggest threat to the Islamic identity of Al-Quds is the policy of "fait accompli", which is adopted by Israel in its Judaization schemes for this Holy City. Moreover, Israel has not stopped at the military occupation of Al-Quds, but has been methodically eroding the geographic, demographic, and urban status of the city and driving its Palestinian inhabitants, by all fair and foul means, into exile from their birthplace or forcible submission to Israel's inexorable and intransigent will.

The reports received from the city of Al-Quds indicate a serious slackness in action to safeguard the historical and civilizational landmarks as well as the Arab-Islamic identity of this Holy City, across all its vital sectors. Such slackness can largely be ascribed to the lack of necessary assistance to support and strengthen the resistance of the Palestinian inhabitants of Al-Quds. Over forty thousand Palestinians, who constitute one fifth of the population of Al-Quds, have been firmly isolated by Israel behind the racist separation wall aimed at evacuating Palestinian inhabitants from the city, even though they are staunchly determined to stay and live in their city in unimaginably difficult circumstances, destitute of minimum living standards in both housing and services.

Much worse, Israel has been frenziedly suppressing any no-Jewish manifestations of Al-Quds, including the vital sectors that are a direct and integral component of the daily life of Palestinians. Education, for instance, has been suffering such a dearth of financial resources that school buildings in Al-Quds have become dilapidated, what with the Israeli occupation authorities laying siege to this vital sector and relentlessly undermining it.

The ideal asset and way forward for the city of Al-Quds is the Palestinian man who lives there. As such, the basic, bare necessities for survival and resistance should be afforded the inhabitants of Al-Quds as they fight for the defense of their city and the sanctities and holy shrines of all of us. And herein comes the role of the OIC Member States to give generous, wide-ranging material assistance and support in favor of the institutions of the city of Al-Quds, including hospitals, schools, and social welfare institutions, so that it can survive the merciless onslaught of Israeli designs and schemes targeting its very identity and history.

Our responsibility is an onerous one, but its fulfillment requires that we should all unite our ranks and pool our resources as Member States and as General Secretariat. Therefore, we have and we will be doing our best and our utmost within our capacities and capabilities to help implement the resolutions and decisions of the Member States on this question. Thus, since the very first day of Israel's attack on the Holy Al-Aqsa, we have spared no effort to maximally mobilize our resources and efforts in the service of this cause. We have openly and unreservedly expressed our condemnation of the assaults on Al-Aqsa the moment they were perpetrated. We have been working to rally all Muslims in a united initiative to counter and face the real and present danger to Prophet Mohammed's Miraculous Ascension Site (PBUH). Within this drive, I have been discussing with H.E. Dato Seri Abdullah Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference, the aggressions committed by Israel against the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and the urgent need for an initiative to stop them. He also has expressed his concern that Israel's recent measures will only exacerbate matters and jeopardize the stability and security of the region and the world, which calls for an emergency response by the United Nations Security Council to address and remedy this Israeli escalation.

I have also addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) as well as number of Foreign Ministers in the Member States in order to brief them on the actions

perpetrated by Israel against the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and emphasize the urgent necessity for all influential players on the international stage to act immediately to thwart the implementation of Israel's designs.

Also, I have asked the OIC Permanent Observer to the United Nations to take the necessary steps to coordinate the efforts of the Islamic Group at the level of the United Nations so as to put an end to Israel's violations. In this respect, the Islamic Group held an ambassadorial-level meeting, which concluded by issuing a declaration condemning Israel's daily breaches against the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque. In addition, a committee was formed to meet the United Nations Secretary-General, who voiced his understanding of the sensitivity of this serious issue and immediately contacted the Quartet on the question. The Committee also met the President of the UN Security Council and briefed him on Israel's actions, reiterating the need for the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities with a view to compelling Israel to put an immediate end to its violations of international law. The President of the UN Security Council promised to convey the Islamic position to the Council members.

Of note in this regard is also my discussion of the Israeli breaches and assaults on the city of Al-Quds with President Jacques Chirac during my recent meeting with him. I took this opportunity to brief him on Israel's violations in the city of Al-Quds and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. I offered the same briefing to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, with whom I also discussed the situation in the Middle East and requested him to stop the participation of two French companies in the construction of railway tracks to connect together the different settlements surrounding the territories of Al-Quds. Moreover, I met with the Member States' Ambassadors accredited to UNESCO and exhorted them to mobilize their efforts to prevent Israel from carrying out its attacks on Muslim Holy Shrines and desist from falsifying and assassinating the cultural, civilizational, and historical identity of the city of Al-Quds.

That said, I have notably addressed several letters to senior international officials concerning the Israeli violations in the city of Al-Quds, including the Quartet members, UNESCO's Director-General, and the Foreign Ministers of the European countries. I informed them of developments in Al-Quds and urged them to bring their pressure to bear on Israel with a view to deterring it from executing its attacks and designs.

Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Palestinian scene has regrettably been marred by certain deplorable conditions of disunity and discord, which reared their ugly head at a time when Palestinians were direly in need of unity and accord. As soon as the first indicators of this internal disunity emerged in Palestine, we took the initiative of contacting our Palestinian brothers and urging them to stem the bloodshed and dry up the seeds of division, dissent, and fratricide for the sake of their national cause. That is why I carried out my visit to Palestine in order to meet Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Ismail Haniyya, and the leaders of the Islamic and national movements inside and outside Palestine. In this effort, we did our best to reconcile the differences and end the fighting among the Palestinians in order to bring them back to the negotiating table.

In this context, there came the noble initiative of His Majesty the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for a Palestinian National Dialogue, which was an important and successful move that restored harmony to the Palestinian scene and was crowned with the signing of the Mecca Agreement that ended all Palestinian feuds and freed them to focus completely on their national battle and campaign to regain freedom and independence, and face the illegal, illicit, and ethically repugnant designs to Judaize Al-Quds.

The formation of the Palestinian National Unity Government on the bases agreed in the Mecca Accord is set to help the Muslim world end the unjust and unfair siege imposed on the Palestinian people and to provide an effective tool to reinvigorate the Palestinian cause and reinstate it to its former importance by bringing it back right to the top of the international community's agenda as the nub of

what is to be immediately grasped, cracked, and resolved, if any just and permanent solution is to be found to restore peace and security. It is therefore high time for the Palestinian people to enjoy - as the rest of the peoples of the world - their freedom and independence without having to suffer injustice, persecution, or denial of their rights.

The past year has been an excellent example of Islamic action in international fora, particularly at the United Nations and the Human Rights Council. It is this good omen that restores and revives our faith and confidence to work relentlessly and with team spirit in order to make sure that we will maximize the advantages of our position as a Muslim Ummah with a well-established, significantly worthy culture and civilization; with huge potential and input to effectively face the real and present challenges and dangers in the service of this Ummah.

In conclusion, let us all pray to Almighty Allah that he should crown our meeting today with total success in achieving its noble objectives, for He alone is the All-Hearing who can grant all legitimate aspirations.

Wassalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. - Thank you for your attention.



JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, JOINT PRESS BRIEFING, BRUSSELS, 23 FEBRUARY 2007

It is a great pleasure for me to receive President Abbas, not only in his quality as the President of the Palestinian people, but also as a very good friend for many years.

We are very happy that you are here at a very crucial moment, after the Quartet meeting, two days ago. I am very glad that we had the possibility to discuss the evolution of the decisions taken in the Quartet and the evolution of the formation of the government of national unity. And not only that, but also to see how we can put into movement what the President has called a political horizon, for the realization of the two-state solution. That is what we want to do and we want to do it rapidly.

Mahmoud Abbas is a good person, someone honest, someone who works hard for his people and who has all the friendship from the peoples and the countries and the leaders of the European Union. So to have him here is a great pleasure and I want to tell him that he will have the support of the European Union as he has had in the last period of time.

The European Union is not boycotting the Palestinian people. We said many times that we would never let down the Palestinian people and we have not done it. In the year 2006 we have spent on the Palestinian people more than in the year 2005. We have been paying allowances for over 150 000 families every month, that amounts to over 1 million people, that is to say 30 % of the Palestinian population. And we will continue to do that in the year 2007, even more if possible.

So we want the engagement between the European Union and the Palestinian people to be maintained and to be increased. And I hope very much that, with the leadership of President Abbas, the situation will evolve in a positive direction and that the dream of so many people in Palestine and many other places in the world, in particular in Europe, to see the realization of two states will come true. This is what the people of Palestine deserve and that we want President Abbas to lead. And for that he will have all the support of the European people.

President Abbas welcome! The floor is yours.



PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, REMARKS AFTER MEETING WITH EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY JAVIER SOLANA, JOINT PRESS BRIEFING, BRUSSELS, 23 FEBRUARY 2007

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to our dear friend Javier Solana for his relentless efforts and commitment to help us and to help the cause of peace in his capacity in the European Union. We appreciate all the assistance that has been given to us by our friend Javier Solana.

Year after year, we have improved our relations with Mr Solana and it is obvious that his efforts are continuing in the direction of easing and alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people and also to help the Palestinian people to achieve their political aspirations.

It is crucial for me, after the Mecca agreement, amid the formation of the national unity government and after the political developments happening recently to be here and to discuss all these issues with my friend Javier Solana.

I have also discussed with Mr Solana today the prospect for the political solution based on the two-state solution: a Palestinian State living side by side in peace with the State of Israel.

What I do here is important, what we do with the Europeans is important, what we do worldwide is important, but the most important thing is to give Palestinians and Israelis the hope – and to revive hope in their minds – that peace and stability is possible.

When we speak about our political prospects and about a political solution, allow me to reiterate our commitment to the principles that I will hold all along the way to achieve peace with Israel.

We remain committed to the two-state solution, recognition of Israel, renouncing violence and terror, and reiterating our commitment to agreements signed and also to the Arab Peace Plan of 2002.

We did not change our positions, we did not change our principles, and that applies also to the Roadmap which is the term of reference of the Peace Process.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS,
DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS,
BRUSSELS, 8/9 MARCH 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

IV. International relations

[...]

41. The European Council welcomed the fact that an agreement has been reached in Mecca on 8 February on the formation of a Palestinian national unity government. It expresses its appreciation for the role of Saudi Arabia and Arab leaders in bringing about Palestinian reconciliation. The EU stands ready to work with a legitimate Palestinian government that adopts a platform reflecting the Quartet principles. It encourages the Quartet to continue its active contribution to the Middle East Peace Process. [...]



**JOINT CO-CHAIRMEN'S STATEMENT, 16TH EU-ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING,
NUREMBERG, 15 MARCH 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

1. The 16th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting was held in Nuremberg, Germany on 14/15 March 2007. The Meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministers of the European Union (EU), the Secretary-General of the Council and High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy, and the Foreign Ministers of the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Secretary General of ASEAN. The Meeting was co-chaired by Germany, as Presidency of the European Union and Cambodia, as the ASEAN Country Co-ordinator for ASEAN-EU dialogue relations. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of openness, trust and solidarity that is the corollary of more than 30 years of dialogue and cooperation. [...]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND GLOBAL ISSUES

21. Ministers reaffirmed their support to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. They further reaffirmed their support for a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on existing agreements, including the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the principles as laid down in the road map. In this connection, Ministers voiced support for the recent efforts of the Middle East Quartet made up of the UN, the EU, the US and the Russian Federation, in promoting a result orientated dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the framework of a renewed political process, with the aim of defining more clearly the political horizon and launching meaningful negotiations.



**PRIME MINISTER-ELECT ISMAIL HANIYEH, SPEECH BEFORE THE
PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (PROGRAM OF PALESTINIAN
UNITY GOVERNMENT), GAZA, 17 MARCH 2007**

[Unofficial translation of Haniyeh's speech to get the confidence vote on his government.]

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate, (Unite in the name of God and never disperse and remember the blessings of God if you become enemies as God will reconcile your hearts to become brothers again in the name and grace of God – verse from the Holy Quran)

We thank God for all the blessings, Brother Dr. Ahmad Bahar, the Acting PLC Speaker Brothers and sisters members of the PLC Honorable ambassadors and consuls and representatives of the countries and international organizations Respectful representatives of the national and Islamic forces, Dear scholars and dignitaries, Dear audience, Peace be upon all of you,

I welcome all of you on this great day and I welcome Mr. Alvaro de Sotro, the Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Middle East region and the accompanying delegation. I was hoping that the PLC would convene with all members present and that it would be headed by our brother Dr. Aziz al-Dweik, the PLC Speaker, and that it would be held in Jerusalem, but the occupation prevented this from happening and insists on keeping the PLC members and ministers under detention and the occupation continues in its policies to isolate and disconnect the parts of the homeland and to Judaize Jerusalem and isolate it from its surroundings, along with the continuation of the incursions and the incursion in Nablus by the occupation on the eve of announcing the government came to escalate the oppression against our people. The arrest of the Speaker of the PLC and his brothers, the members of the PLC and the ministers and the heads of local councils, is clear proof on the cruelty and oppression of the occupation and evidence on the collective punishment and oppressive siege against our people and their government and their PLC in the past year because of the democratic option that we adopted in our political life and because of our commitment to the Palestinian rights and constants and because we rejected making any concessions under the austerity of the siege and aggression.

We have worked and exerted all efforts for the release of our brothers - the ministers and PLC members – and I affirm to our great brother Dr. Aziz al-Dweik and his brothers the PLC members and the ministers and the leaders in the prisons and the thousands of heroic prisoners who are imprisoned in the occupation prisons and in solitary confinement that you are our top priority and we will not rest until you are released and I call upon God to see your release soon, and I am pleased to congratulate the brothers who signed the prisoners document which constituted the basis for the national conciliation document: Marwan al-Barghouthi and Abdul Khaleq al-Natsheh and Abdul Rahim Mallouh and Bassam al-Sa'di and Mustafa Badran.

We stand today with pride and appreciation in front of the thousands of martyrs who blessed our holy lands with their blood and who paved the way in front of us towards freedom and independent and dignity, in particular the major martyrs the late President Yasser Arafat and Imam Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and Dr. Fathi al-Shiqaqi and Abu Ali Mustafa, and Omar al-Qasem and Abu Jihad and Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi and Abul Abbas and Jihad Jibril and the long list of martyrs whose work and sacrifices made us reach where we are now.

We also remember the our heroic injured who drew with their blood the map of Palestine; we also remember our refugees who are standing at the gate of the homeland in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon waiting for the hour of return to their homes from which they were evicted by the oppression and aggression; these refugees who lived and suffered the pains of Diaspora and exile and who always kept Palestine in their hearts and the new generations of the refugees didn't forget their right of return.

I stress here in particular our people residing in Iraq and I appeal to the Iraqi leadership and religious references and all parties concerned to interfere and protect our people and to stop targeting and terrorizing them.

I also stand in pride and honor in front of our people in the 1948 territories and I express to them our deepest appreciation to their role in protecting Jerusalem and defending the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Palestinian people have lived for close to 60 years under the yoke of dispersion, deprivation and eviction and suffered due to occupation all kinds of suffering and oppression and aggression while our people marked a long process of struggle, resistance, perseverance, and resilience through which they sacrificed hundreds of thousands of martyrs and injured and prisoners and gave the best examples of sacrifice and self denial and giving and clinging to their rights and constants and have always sought national unity and this national unity government is an important expression of this national unity.

This government was born after many efforts exerted by the loyal members of our people who worked day and night to reach a reconciliatory vision and common denominators that gather all Palestinians under one umbrella.

This government came as a fruit of the positive spirit and mutual confidence that resulted in solving all issues in the various fields and in ending the internal fighting between the brothers and was the major result of the blessed Mecca Agreement under the sponsorship of the Saudi King Abdul Aziz and through the high sense of national responsibility by Mr. President Abu Mazen and the brothers in Fatah Leadership and by brother Khaled Mash'al and his brothers in Hamas leadership who all showed high leadership sense of responsibility at this critical phase and they agreed in Mecca to inaugurate a new phase in the life of our Palestinian people and to close a painful chapter in their life.

Brother President Abu Mazen showed strong determination to protect the Mecca Agreement and worked to convince all parties on the need to respect and deal with the Palestinian people on the basis of this agreement and we consolidated constructive work during the consultations phase to form this government.

I pray for God to keep this brotherly climate and this constructive cooperation as realized in the national unity government which came as a result of a long series of Palestinian dialogues where the brotherly country Egypt had the major role in sponsoring and following up the dialogues and where

the Palestinian factions signed in Cairo the first comprehensive Palestinian agreement in March 2005 and of course the government is also the fruit of appreciated efforts by several Arab countries and Arab and Islamic organizations.

Based on the rights of our people and in compliance to the national conciliation document and in light of the letter of commissioning, and based on the fact that we are still going through a phase of liberation and building, the program of the national unity government will be based on the following:

First: at the political level

- 1- The government affirms that the key to security and stability in the region depends on ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and recognizing the right to self determination of the Palestinian people; the government will work with the Arab brothers and with the international community for the sake of ending the occupation and regaining the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, mainly the establishment of the independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty on the territories that were occupied in 1967 with al-Quds as its capital, so that we can build a solid basis for peace, security and prosperity in the region and for the sake of the coming generations.
- 2- The government shall abide to protect the higher national interests of the Palestinian people and protect their rights and preserve and develop their accomplishments and work on achieving their national goals as ratified by the resolutions of the PNC meetings and the Articles of the Basic Law and the national conciliation document and the resolutions of the Arab summits and based on this, the government shall respect the international legitimacy resolutions and the agreements that were signed by the PLO.
- 3- The government shall exert special efforts to encourage all Palestinian parties to accelerate work and implement what came in Cairo Agreement pertaining to the PLO.
- 4- The government shall abide by rejecting the so called state with temporary borders which is posed according to the American and Israeli scheme.
- 5- To stress on the right of return and cling to it and call on the international community to implement what came in Resolution 194, especially the right of return of the Palestinian refugees to their lands and properties from which they were evicted and to compensate them.
- 6- To work diligently for the sake of liberating the heroic female and male prisoners from the Israeli occupation prisons and to work for the release of the abducted PLC members and the ministers and the heads of local councils.
- 7- The government vows that it will confront the measures of the occupation on the ground in terms of the assassinations, arrests, and incursion, and military checkpoints and address and work on solving the issue of the crossings and the siege and the closure.
- 8- To consolidate the relations with the Arab and Islamic countries and the friendly countries and the forces that support freedom justice and to and open up and cooperate with the regional and international surrounding on the basis of mutual respect.

Second: Jerusalem

- 1- To form a higher committee for Jerusalem affairs in coordination with the PLO Executive Committee to follow up the affairs and steadfastness in the city of Jerusalem and to allocate a clear budget from the government to Jerusalem from the general budget.
- 2- to confront the Israeli policies pertaining to Jerusalem in terms of its land and people and holy sites and work on providing the adequate resources in the budget to support the steadfastness of our people in Jerusalem and to expose the measures of the occupation against the city and against al-Aqsa Mosque and to activate the cause of Jerusalem in all regional and international arenas and call on our Arab and Islamic nation to assume their responsibilities in protecting Jerusalem and support the people of Jerusalem politically and at the media level.

Third: at the level of confronting the occupation

- 1- The government affirms that resistance in all its forms, including popular resistance against the occupation, is a legitimate right of the Palestinian people as granted by the international norms and charters; our Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves in face of any Israeli continuous aggression.
- 2- The government, through national conciliation, will work on consolidating the calm and expanding it to become a comprehensive reciprocal and concurrent calm and in return the Israeli occupation

has to halt its measures on the ground in terms of assassinations, arrests, incursions and home demolition and leveling of lands and the digging works in Jerusalem and it should work on removing the checkpoints and reopening the crossings and lifting all the restrictions on movement and setting a timetable for the release of prisoners.

- 3- The government affirms what came in the national conciliation document on the issue of the administration of the negotiations which is the jurisdiction of the PLO and the President of the PNA on the basis of clinging to the Palestinian national goals and towards achieving these goals, so that any offer on any final agreement should be presented to the new Palestinian National Council for ratification or to hold a general referendum to have the Palestinian people inside and abroad and to have a law that organizes this referendum.
- 4- The government shall support the exerted efforts and shall encourage the relevant parties to accelerate and end the case of the Israeli soldier in the context of an honorable prisoners exchange deal and return of the deportees.
- 5- The government affirms that peace and stability in the region depends on ending the occupation and on seeing our people regaining their national rights and removing the apartheid wall and settlements and halt of the Judaization of Jerusalem and policies of annexation and all forms of racial discrimination and restore the rights to their owners.

Fourth: at the security level

The national unity government realizes the internal difficult conditions and believes that its top priority at the coming phase is to control the current security conditions and this requires full cooperation between the presidency and the government in order to achieve this, the government shall adopt the following:

- 1- To call and work to reformulate the national security council that represents the terms of reference to all security services and the framework that organizes their work and define their policies.
- 2- to structure the security services and build them on professional basis and work to provide their needs and reduce the partisan considerations and move them away from political polarizations and conflicts and consolidate in them the loyalty to the homeland and to have them abide by executing the decisions of their political leadership and to make sure that the personnel working in these services commit themselves to the tasks commissioned to them.
- 3- To abide by implementing the laws on work and performance in the security services that have been ratified by the PLC.
- 4- to set up a comprehensive security plan to end all forms of chaos and security chaos and aggressions and protect and prevent any bloodshed and honor of families and funds and public and private properties and control the weapons and provide security to the citizen and work on ending the oppression inflicted on the people through the rule of the law and support the police to perform its duties in the best manner when implementing the decisions of the judicial authority.

Fifth: at the legal level

- 1- the government shall work in full cooperation with the judicial authority to secure the reform and activation and protection of the judicial apparatus with all its institutions in a manner that can enable it to perform its duties in the context of achieving justice and fighting corruption and abiding by the rule of the law and implement the law with transparency and integrity on everybody and follow up the corruption files and the abuse of public funds.
- 2- The government affirms that it work according to the Basic Law which organizes the relations between the three authorities on the basis of separating between the authorities and respect the authorities granted to each of these authorities according to the Basic Law.
- 3- The government shall assist Mr. President in performing his various duties and will make sure to cooperate fully with the Presidency institution and the constitutional institutions and work with the PLC and the juridical authorities towards developing the Palestinian political system on the basis of having a unified strong national authority.

Sixth: the economic situation

- 1- The government shall work on ending the siege imposed on our Palestinian people in all its forms.
- 2- The government calls for reconsidering Paris Economic Protocol in a manner that liberates the Palestinian economy from subordination.

- 3- The government shall give priority to upgrade and advance the national economy and protect the economic, productive and services sectors and encourage the national exports and to support the national products with all possible means and develop the economic and trade relations with the Arab and Islamic world and with the European Union and the rest of the world.
- 4- to protect the consumer and encourage the private sector and provide the proper climate for its activities and lay down the sound rules for government work and its official institutions and the institutions of the private sector and end monopoly and decide on the means to use the available resources and achieve justice in distribution. The government shall work on providing the proper climate and protection and stability of investment projects.
- 5- The government encourages economic development in a manner that matches with our values and norms and to achieve social justice in a manner that serves development and protection to the private sector and encourage investment and fight unemployment and poverty and reinforce the productive economic sectors and reconstruct the infrastructure and develop the industrial zone and the housing and technology sectors.
- 6- to reconsider the investment laws and put an end to the monopoly activities between the executive authority and the private sector.
- 7- to support the agricultural sector and increase the developmental budget allocated to it.
- 8- to work for having regular payment of salaries to the employees in the public sector and abide by the timetable to pay the delayed salaries and the delayed dues to the private sector.
- 9- to pay attention to the sectors of laborers and farmers and fishermen and work on alleviating their suffering through support and special projects.

Seventh: in the field of reform

- 1- The government adopts the administrative and financial reform project and will cooperate with the PLC to issue laws that reinforce reform and fight corruption.
- 2- to develop the structures and work methods in the public institutions in a manner that achieves effective performance and abidance by the law.
- 3- to set up a plan to rationalize the government spending and in all fields.
- 4- to fight corruption and reinforce the values of integrity and transparency and prohibit abuse of public funds and formulate a Palestinian societal strategy for administrative development.

Eighth: at the level of the Palestinian values system

- 1- The eleventh government shall abide by consolidating national unity and protect social peace and consolidate the values of mutual respect and adoption of the language of dialogue and end all forms of tension and consolidate the culture of tolerance and protection of the Palestinian blood and ban internal fighting.
- 2- The government affirms the unity of the Palestinian people inside and abroad.
- 3- The government shall seek to consolidate national conciliation and internal stability and handle the ramifications of the past regretful incidents using the proper mechanisms and the government shall abide by the rule of the law and provide protection to the citizen and public and private properties with all resulting commitments. I call upon our brothers and families of the martyrs of the regretful incidents for more patience and I affirm to them that we support them and stand by their side in their grief.
- 4- The government shall abide by reinforcing the principle of citizenship through equality in rights and duties and equal opportunities and consolidate social justice in appointments and recruitments in the various ministries and institutions and end all forms of political favoritism in civil and security recruitments.
- 5- The government affirms its respect to the principle of political pluralism and protection of public freedoms and reinforce the values of Shura and democracy and protect the human rights and consolidate the principle of justice and equality and protect the free press and freedom of expression and the right to disagree and the Palestinian women rights and abide by peaceful transfer of power and authorities and conclude the elections at the local councils as soon as possible.
- 6- The government shall abide to consolidate political partnership and encourage all forces on the arena to start a serious dialogue to achieve this partnership.
- 7- To support the families of martyrs and prisoners and offer them assistance and preserve their dignified life and provide them with their needs.

- 8- The government shall abide by providing a dignified life to the Palestinian citizen and provide the requirements of life and social welfare and meet the health needs and quality health and work on tackling the phenomena of poverty and unemployment through providing job opportunities and development projects and social securities and the social welfare program.
- 9- The government shall work to develop the education apparatus and improve the conditions of teachers and encourage scientific research and maintain the neutrality of the education apparatus; the government also supports achieving and implementing the national fund for university education.
- 10- To pay utmost attention to the youth and the Palestinian sports movement and provide its needs and seek to expand the sports infrastructure, including accelerating work to conclude the sports city project and keep participation in external activities and competitions in a manner that reinforces the status of Palestine in the sports arenas at the Arab, regional and international levels.
- 11- The government shall sponsor implementing the special law for people with special needs
- 12- To protect the rights of women and offer space and room for women for political participation and in decision making and to contribute in the process of building in all institutions and at all levels.
- 13- The government shall encourage and support NGO and societal action and the civil society institutions.

Ninth: International relations

At the time when our government stresses on its Arab and Islamic depth and as its expresses high esteem and appreciation to the Arab Islamic political and economic and media support, it shall work on activating its role in the Arab League and in the Islamic Conference Organization and we are looking forward to the Arab Summit meeting to be held in Riyadh at the end of this month to take decisions to end the siege and to support and protect Mecca Agreement. The government also expresses pride in the various international ties which have been deepened through international support to our people and to their legitimate rights. The government shall work on establishing sound and solid relations with the various world countries and with the international institutions, including the UN and the Security Council and the international regional organizations in a manner that assists reinforcing world peace and stability.

The government affirms its commitment to the civilization heritage based on tolerance and coexistence and dialogue between the civilizations and its respect to the international law and the international humanitarian law in a manner that matches with our norms and original traditions. The European Union has offered lots of assistance to our Palestinian people and supported our people's right in freedom and independence and the EU has had serious standpoints in launching criticism to the Israeli occupation policies and this was also adopted by China and Japan in their foreign policies towards the Palestinian cause. Therefore, the government is interested in solid ties with the EU and with Russian Federation and China and Japan and India and Latin American countries and we expect them to take practical steps towards ending the siege imposed on our people and towards exercising pressure on the occupation authorities to end the siege and respect human rights as stipulated in the international charters and to have the occupation withdraw from our occupied territories and to end the repeated aggression measures against our people. The government shall also work on developing relations with the countries with permanent membership in the Security Council.

The government calls on the United States Administration to reconsider its position towards the Palestinian cause and calls on the need to respect the option of the Palestinian people as realized and translated in the national unity government and to stop adopting double standard policies as the Palestinian government looks forwards to having good relations between the Palestinian and American peoples.

Brothers and sisters,

I am pleased to express deep gratitude to the Saudi King Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz for his blessed efforts in uniting the Palestinians and in reaching the Mecca Agreement which we are depending at this phase and we express also gratitude to the Saudi leadership and people for their warm hospitality and sponsorship.

We also express gratitude to the brotherly Egypt which supported our people at times of crises and exerted tremendous efforts through the Egyptian security delegation residing in Gaza Strip in their efforts to stop the Palestinian bloodshed and in reinforcing unity and bridging the gap between the various positions.

We also extend our appreciation and gratitude to brotherly Syria which hosted several Palestinian dialogues, including the last Damascus dialogue which prepared the climate for Mecca Agreement. We also thank the brotherly Qatar which expressed original Arab positions and supported our people during their crisis and the siege and showed concern for the Palestinian unity and we also thank the brotherly Jordan which followed up the Palestinian moves politically and internally and expressed readiness to host the Palestinian meetings, and also Sudan which exerted blessed efforts supporting the Palestinian people and moved also within its capacity as head of the President of the Arab Summit and we express gratitude to brotherly Yemen and the brotherly Arab Moroccan countries and the brotherly Gulf Cooperation Council countries and we also extend gratitude to Islamic Republic of Iran which alleviated the suffering of our people through its support. We also extend gratitude to the Arab League and to the Islamic Conference Organization and we also thank all friendly countries which announced their positions and welcomed the formation of the national unity government and expressed willingness to work towards the end of the siege imposed on our people.

We also express deep gratitude to the Follow Up Committee and the factions and the figures inside and abroad who followed up the internal dialogues and moved at all phases for the sake of reaching this great national moment.

Dear audience,

The challenges ahead are big and there are many difficulties and those who seek to frustrate our efforts and experience are many and our path is still long and our battle is severe and our path is not paved with roses but there are high hopes and our people are waiting anxiously and the eyes of the whole nation are looking at us and everyone is waiting to see what this national unity government will offer and if it will rise to the level of the challenges. We are determined to accomplish things to our people and we are optimistic and we are full of confidence in God first and in our people and nation second and we will proceed in the path of dignity until we achieve victory, freedom, return and independence and the occupation and the siege will end God willing.

I present to your honorable council the members of my government to get your vote of confidence and I welcome all the ministers who make up this government and I extend appreciation and gratitude to the members of the tenth government with whom I had the honor to work as they worked under difficult conditions and they assumed all difficult tasks and showed high sense of responsibility and remained steadfast in face of the hurricanes and remained loyal to the martyrs and injured and prisoners and their families and never changed or yielded and we thank them on behalf of our people.



**PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY, PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL
UNITY GOVERNMENT, 17 MARCH 2007**

[The platform below was based on the Mecca Accord (see 8 Feb. above), which called for the formation of a Palestinian unity government. Below is the text that was voted in on 17 March 2007.]

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate,

*The Program of the National Unity Government,
(The eleventh government)*

The Palestinian people have lived for more than 60 years under the yoke of dispersion, deprivation and eviction and suffered due to occupation all kinds of suffering and oppression and aggression while our people marked a long process of struggle, resistance, perseverance, and resilience through which they sacrificed hundreds of thousands of martyrs and injured and prisoners and gave the best examples of sacrifice and self denial and giving and clinging to their rights and constants moving through important historical phases until we reached the phase of the national unity government (the eleventh government).

This government was born after many efforts exerted by the loyal members of our people who worked day and night to reach a reconciliatory vision and common denominators that gather all Palestinians under one umbrella.

This government came as a fruit of the positive spirit and mutual confidence that resulted in solving all issues in the various fields and this government is one of the major and leading results of the blessed Mecca Agreement under the sponsorship of the Saudi King Abdul Aziz. The national unity government is the culmination of a long series of Palestinian dialogues where Egypt and Syria had a leading role in sponsoring these dialogues and following them up with appreciated efforts by several brotherly Arab countries and the Arab and Islamic organizations. It also reflects the devotion and loyalty to the long process of martyrs and the pains of the prisoners and injured, mainly the major martyrs the late president Yasser Arafat and Sheikh Imam Ahmad Yaseen and Leader Abu Ali Mustafa and leader Fathi al-Shiqaqi and leader Abdul Abbas.

Based on the national conciliation document and in light of the letter of commissioning, the national unity government will work at all levels in a manner that achieves the higher interests of the Palestinian people in the following manner:

First: at the political level

- 1- The government affirms that the key to security and stability in the region depends on ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and recognizing the right to self determination of the Palestinian people; the government will work with the international community for the sake of ending the occupation and regaining the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people so that we can build a solid basis for peace, security and prosperity in the region.
- 2- The government shall abide to protect the higher national interests of the Palestinian people and protect their rights and preserve and develop their accomplishments and work on achieving their national goals as ratified by the resolutions of the PNC meetings and the Articles of the Basic Law and the national conciliation document and the resolutions of the Arab summits and based on this, the government shall respect the international legitimacy resolutions and the agreements that were signed by the PLO.
- 3- The government shall abide by rejecting the so called state with temporary borders because this idea is based on taking away from the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.
- 4- To cling to the right of the Palestinian refugees and right of return to their lands and properties.
- 5- To work diligently for the sake of liberating the heroic prisoners from the Israeli occupation prisons.
- 6- To confront the measures of the occupation on the ground in terms of the assassinations, arrests, and incursions. The government shall grant special importance to the city of Jerusalem to confront the Israeli policies pertaining to the people, lands and holy sites of Jerusalem.
- 7- To consolidate the relations with the Arab and Islamic countries and open up and cooperate with the regional and international surrounding on the basis of mutual respect.

Second: at the level of the occupation

- 1- The government affirms that peace and stability in the region depends on ending all forms of occupation of the Palestinian territories and removing the apartheid wall and settlements and halt of the Judaization of Jerusalem and policies of annexation and restore the rights to their owners.
- 2- The government affirms that resistance is a legitimate right of the Palestinian people as granted by the international norms and charters; our Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves in face of any Israeli aggression and believes that halting resistance depends on ending the occupation and achieving freedom, return and independence.
- 3- Despite this, the government, through national conciliation, will work on consolidating the calm and expanding it to become a comprehensive reciprocal truce happening at the same time between both sides and this should be in return for Israel halting its occupation measures on the ground in terms of assassinations, arrests, incursions and home demolition and leveling of lands and the digging works in Jerusalem and it should work on removing the checkpoints and reopening the crossings and lifting all the restrictions on movement and the release of prisoners.

- 4- The government affirms what came in the national conciliation document on the issue of the administration of the negotiations which is the jurisdiction of the PLO and the President of the PNA on the basis of clinging to the Palestinian national goals and towards achieving these goals, so that any offer on any final agreement should be presented to the new Palestinian National Council for ratification or to hold a general referendum to have the Palestinian people inside and abroad and to have a law that organizes this referendum.
- 5- The government shall support the exerted efforts and shall encourage the relevant parties to accelerate and end the case of the Israeli soldier in the context of an honorable prisoners exchange deal.

Third: at the security level

The national unity government realizes the internal difficult conditions and believes that its top priority at the coming phase is to control the current security conditions and in order to achieve this, the government shall depend in its program on the following:

- 1- to form a higher national security council that represents the terms of reference to all security services and the framework that organizes their work and define their policies, and request from the PLC to finalize the law pertaining to the national security higher council.
- 2- to structure the security services and build them on professional basis and work to provide their needs and reduce the partisan considerations and move them away from political polarizations and conflicts and consolidate in them the loyalty to the homeland and to have them abide by executing the decisions of their political leadership and to make sure that the personnel working in these services commit themselves to the tasks commissioned to them.
- 3- To work on activating the laws that have been ratified by the PLC with regards to the security institution.
- 4- to set up a comprehensive security plan to end all forms of chaos and security chaos and aggressions and protect and prevent any bloodshed and honor of families and funds and public and private properties and control the weapons and provide security to the citizen and work on ending the oppression inflicted on the people through the rule of the law and support the police to perform its duties in the best manner.

Fourth: at the legal level

- 1- the government shall work in full cooperation with the judicial authority to secure the reform and activation and protection of the judicial apparatus with all its institutions in a manner that can enable it to perform its duties in the context of achieving justice and fighting corruption and abiding by the rule of the law and implement the law with transparency and integrity on everybody without any interference from any party.
- 2- The government affirms that it work according to the Basic Law which organizes the relations between the three authorities on the basis of separating between the authorities and respect the authorities granted to the Presidency and to the government according to the law and order.
- 3- The government shall assist Mr. President in performing his various duties and will make sure to cooperate fully with the Presidency institution and the constitutional institutions and work with the PLC and the juridical authorities towards developing the Palestinian political system on the basis of having a unified strong national authority.

Fifth: At the level of the Palestinian values system

- 1- The eleventh government shall abide by consolidating national unity and protect social peace and consolidate the values of mutual respect and adoption of the language of dialogue and end all forms of tension and consolidate the culture of tolerance and protection of the Palestinian blood and ban internal fighting.
- 2- The government affirms the unity of the Palestinian people inside and abroad and shall work to have the participation of the Palestinian people abroad in all matters pertaining to the Palestinian affairs.
- 3- The government shall seek to consolidate national conciliation and towards achieving comprehensive national conciliation through forming a higher national commission under the sponsorship of the presidency and the government to be formed from the PLC and the factions and the well known

figures and legal experts and scholars. The aim of this commission is to end the blood problems between the factions and families and assess the damage caused to the properties and institutions and work on solving these problems.

- 4- The government shall work on reinforcing the principle of citizenship through equality in rights and duties and equal opportunities and consolidate social justice in appointments and recruitments in the various ministries and institutions and end all forms of political favoritism in civil and security recruitments.
- 5- The government affirms its respect to the principle of political pluralism and protection of public freedoms and reinforce the values of Shura and democracy and protect the human rights and consolidate the principle of justice and equality and protect the free press and freedom of expression and abide by peaceful transfer of power and authorities and conclude the elections at the local councils within the next six months God willing.
- 6- The government shall abide by providing a dignified life to the Palestinian citizen and provide the requirements of life and social welfare and meet the health needs and develop the health facilities and expand health insurance and improve the situation of the hospitals and clinics and work on tackling the phenomena of poverty and unemployment through providing job opportunities and development projects and social securities and the social welfare program; the government shall grant special care to the education and higher education and shall encourage scientific research and provide its needs.
- 7- To care for the sectors of laborers, farmers, fishermen and the sectors of youths and women so that women can assume the status they deserve based on their sacrifices and to secure to them participation in the decision making process and to contribute in the building process in all institutions and ministries and at the various fields.

Sixth: the economic situation

- 1- The government shall work on ending the siege imposed on our Palestinian people through the programs and relations and to activate the regional and international frameworks to alleviate the suffering of our Palestinian people.
- 2- The government shall give priority to upgrade and advance the national economy and encourage the economic and trade sectors with the Arab and Islamic world and encourage economic and trade relations with the European Union and the rest of the world.
- 3- to move to protect the consumer and encourage the private sector and provide the proper climate for its activities and lay down the sound rules for government work and its official institutions and the institutions of the private sector and end monopoly. The government shall work on providing the proper climate and protection and stability of investment projects.
- 4- The government shall work on respecting the principles of free economy in a manner that meets with our values and norms and in a manner that serves the Palestinian development and protect the private sector and encourage investment and fight unemployment and poverty and reinforce the productive economic sectors and reconstruct the infrastructure and develop the industrial zone and the housing and technology sectors.

Seventh: the field of reform

- 1- The government which adopts the reform strategy affirms to your respectful council and to the people who granted us their esteemed confidence that we will remain faithful and the citizen shall feel this in the work of the government – God willing – through real achievements on the ground in the areas of administrative and financial reforms and cooperate with the PLC on issuing the laws that reinforce reform and that fights corruption and to look into the structures and methods of work in a manner that guarantees efficacy of work and performance in the ministries and their abidance by the law.
- 2- The government shall work on meeting the urgent needs of the citizen in the various fields through planning and initiatives and in defining the priorities of spending and rationalize spending and in launching initiatives and innovative ideas and maintain the highest degrees of credibility and transparency.
- 3- within the context of reform, the government shall seek to fight corruption and reinforce the values of integrity and transparency and refrain from abusing public funds and we will give the matter of administrative development a social dimension and societal culture that establishes for a new con-

cept and formulate a Palestinian societal strategy for administrative development and to develop a sound working mechanism based on the principles of modern administration which can assist in implementing this strategy according to the requirements and needs of the Palestinian society.

Eighth: International relations

At the time when our government stresses on its Arab and Islamic depth, it shall work on establishing sound and solid relations with the various world countries and with the international institutions, including the UN and the Security Council and the international regional organizations in a manner that assists reinforcing world peace and stability. The European Union has offered lots of assistance to our Palestinian people and supported our people's right in freedom and independence and the EU has had serious standpoints in launching criticism to the Israeli occupation policies; therefore, we are interested in solid ties with the EU and we expect from it a larger role in exerting pressure on the occupation authorities to respect the human rights as stipulated by the international charters to withdraw its troops from the occupied Palestinian Territories and halt all and repeated aggressions against our people. The government seeks to develop the relations with the countries with permanent membership in the Security Council, mainly Russia and China and Japan and the African and Asian countries in a manner that secures the just rights of our people and at the same time, the government calls on the United States Administration to reconsider its unjust positions towards the Palestinian cause and calls on the need to respect the option of the Palestinian people as realized and translated in the national unity government.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, 21 MARCH 2007

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 and, in particular, the establishment of a Palestinian National Unity Government.

The Quartet reiterated its respect for Palestinian democracy and the agreement reached in Mecca on 8 February 2007, which laid the foundation for Palestinian reconciliation. The Quartet expressed hope that the establishment of a new Government on 17 March 2007 would help end intra-Palestinian violence and ensure calm. The Quartet reaffirmed its previous statements with regard to the need for a Palestinian Government committed to nonviolence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map, and encouraged progress in this direction. The Quartet agreed that the commitment of the new Government in this regard will be measured not only on the basis of its composition and platform, but also its actions. The Quartet expressed its expectation that the unity Government will act responsibly, demonstrate clear and credible commitment to the Quartet principles, and support the efforts of President [Mahmoud] Abbas to pursue a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, thereby achieving the peace, security and freedom the Israeli and Palestinian people desire and deserve.

The Quartet reiterated the continuing need to coordinate and mobilize international assistance in support of the Palestinian people and endorsed the continuation of the Temporary International Mechanism for a three-month period, while it evaluates the situation and the international community works to develop a more sustainable international mechanism for support to the Palestinians.

The Quartet expressed its strong support for Secretary Rice's efforts to further facilitate discussions with President Abbas and Prime Minister [Ehud] Olmert with the aim of defining more clearly the political horizon for the establishment of a Palestinian State and an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Quartet agreed to meet in the region soon to review developments and discuss the way ahead.



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS TO THE 19TH ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT,
RIYADH, 28 MARCH 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

*[Solana gave - on behalf of the EU - full support for the Saudi efforts
to relaunch the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.]*

It is a great honour to be among friends and to speak in the name of the European Union. I would like to thank the Saudi government warmly for its hospitality.

I also wish to praise our host, the Custodian of the Holy Mosques, His Royal Highness, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud for his initiatives towards stability and peace in the Middle East. Your Highness's efforts to restore the Arab consensus and unity are essential for a just and stable solution of the conflicts that affect the stability of the region and the prosperity of all its people.

This is a priority task behind which I am sure all the members of the Arab League will rally. We have said for many years that the problems of the region can only be solved by its peoples. Failure to rise to today's challenges would put the Middle East at risk of missing the train of human and economic development taking place elsewhere in our globalised world.

It has been a long-held European position that the Arab-Israeli conflict is at the core of the problems of the region. Therefore, we welcome the Mecca agreement as a fundamental contribution to averting intra-Palestinian strife and to solving this conflict, which calls for the end of the occupation that began in 1967, a two-state solution and a comprehensive settlement. We support President Abbas' untiring work towards the fulfilment of the Palestinian national goals, according to the principles he has repeatedly reaffirmed, at the United Nations General Assembly last September and most recently at the inauguration of the new Palestinian government on 17 March.

These are: the commitment to the previous agreements reached by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority, mutual recognition, renunciation of violence and commitment to negotiations. The European Union has never and will never let the Palestinian people down. I sincerely hope that as a new opportunity opens towards conflict resolution, all the members of the Arab League will assume their responsibilities and contribute to the success of this enterprise.

The European Union remains dedicated to protecting the sovereignty and the integrity of Lebanon, free from foreign interference and united in the pursuit of democracy. The European contribution to the security and the reconstruction of Lebanon is witness to the extent of our commitment to this goal. The EU will continue to demand the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions to that effect.

The international community sent Iran a very clear signal when it unanimously adopted the new United Nations Security Council resolution on Saturday. Iran has to comply with its international obligations. The suspicions surrounding its programme are having a negative effect on the stability of the region. We should continue to work together towards a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. Iran, like every country, has the right to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. [...]

Your Royal Highness, Mr Secretary-General,

Once again we find ourselves together, the European Union and the Arab League. Once again we have an opportunity to re-affirm our joint commitment to the values of civilisation that we share.

More than ever Europeans and Arabs have to face common challenges. I am confident that we will find ways to improve our cooperation. I am sure that this summit in Riyadh will make a decisive contribution to the resolution of the problems of your region.



**LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES, SUMMIT MEETING, 19TH SESSION,
STATEMENT RELAUNCHING THE ARAB PEACE INITIATIVE
(RIYADH DECLARATION), RIYADH, 29 MARCH 2007**

*[They two-day summit reaffirmed the Arab states' commitment
to the Saudi initiative first endorsed at a 2002 summit].*

We, the leaders of Arab states, meeting in the 19th session of the council of the league of Arab states at the summit level in Riyadh, capital of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 28-29 March 2007,

Based on the principles and aims stated in the Arab league charter and other Arab conventions; including the document of covenant, accord and solidarity between Arab countries, and the document of development and modernization in the Arab world;

Inspired by our religious and Arab values that renounce all forms of immoderation, extremism and racism; and stressing the aims of boosting the Arab identity, deepening its cultural bases, and continuing its open humanistic message, while facing the challenges and risks threatening to re-schematize the state of affairs in the region, dissolve the common Arab identity, and undermine the connections that bind us;

Affirming the urgent need to regain the spirit of Arab solidarity, protect the collective Arab security, develop Arab cooperation in the economic, social and developmental fields, commit to seriousness and credibility in joint Arab action, and meet the requirements of supporting the Arab League and its institutions;

Declare our resolve to:

Act diligently to protect the Arab identity, boost its components and bases, and strengthen belonging to it in the hearts and minds of children, adolescents and young men and women, since arabism is not a racist or ethnic concept, rather it is a unified cultural identity, with the arabic language as its means of expression and of preserving its heritage, and it is a common cultural framework based on spiritual, moral and humanistic values, enriched by diversity and plurality, by openness to other human cultures, and by corresponding to accelerating scientific and technological advances, without dissolution, crumble or losing of character, We therefore decide:

To give utmost priority to the development of education and its curricula in the Arab world, so as to deepen the common Arab identity, respond to the needs of modernization and comprehensive development, deepen the values of dialogue and creativity, and strengthen human rights principles and women effective positive participation.

To develop the joint Arab action in the educational, cultural and scientific fields, through activation of existent institutions and offering them the required significance and the needed human and financial resources, particularly concerning the advancement of scientific research; the joint production of books, programs and materials for children and teenagers; the launching of a broad translation movement from and to the Arabic language; and the promotion of Arabic language presence in all fields including communications, mass media, internet, and science and technology.

To spread the culture of moderation, tolerance, dialogue, and openness; to reject all forms of terrorism and extremism, as well as all exclusionary racist trends, hatred campaigns and endeavors to question our humanistic values or defame our religious beliefs and holy places; and to warn against employing sectarian plurality for political purposes that aim at dividing our nation and its countries and peoples, and at igniting destructive seditions and civil strife.

Consolidate effective Arab solidarity which contains crises and settles disputes between member states peacefully, within the framework of activating the Arab security and peace council approved by previous Arab summits; development of dialogue with regional neighboring countries in accordance with unified and specified Arab positions; revival of collective Arab security protection institutions

and confirming its terms of reference stipulated in Arab covenants; and attempting to meet Arab defense and security needs.

Affirm the option of just and comprehensive peace as a strategic option for the Arab nation; in accordance with the Arab peace initiative that draws the right path for reaching a peaceful settlement for the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the principles and resolutions of international legitimacy, and the land for peace formula.

Stress the importance of freeing the region of all weapons of mass destruction, without double standards and eclecticism; warning against starting a dangerous and destructive race of nuclear armament in the region; and emphasizing the right of all countries to possess peaceful nuclear energy according to international terms of reference, and their emanating inspection and control regime.

The dangerous conditions witnessed by our region, where Arab land is violated; Arab resources are wasted; and Arab identity and culture is threatened, necessitate that we honestly and deeply reexamine our state of affairs.

We are all, leaders, officials and citizens; parents and children; partners in drawing our own destiny and preserving our identity, culture, values and interests. dangerous challenges can only increase the resolve and faith of great nations. The Arab nation is capable, with god help, to achieve the security, dignity, and prosperity it deserves when it unifies its ranks and strengthens its joint action.



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY, SPEECH ON THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
AND THE ROLE OF THE EU, PLENARY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
BRUSSELS, 29 MARCH 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

Mr President, Honourable Members of Parliament,

I have just returned from Riyadh where I had the honour of representing the European Union at the Summit of the League of Arab States. My flight landed just a few hours ago but it gives me great pleasure to address the Chamber now. This is my first speech under the Presidency of Mr Hans-Gert Pötering. Please allow me to congratulate him once more, this time on his home territory, on his election.

Regarding the Middle East, as I said earlier, I returned a few hours ago from the Summit of the League of Arab States in Riyadh. The summit currently taking place in the Saudi capital is one of the most important ever held by the Arab countries. This is due to a number of factors but above all to the unquestionable leadership which Saudi Arabia is exercising in the Arab world. I was profoundly struck by two things said by King Abdullah in his opening speech: firstly, that the Arab people are more disunited today than they were when the League of Arab States was established, and secondly that responsibility for the problems of the region lies to a great extent with the Arab leaders themselves. The Arab world is not condemned to backwardness. Restoring unity is probably the first step to restoring trust. It is the Arab people, and only them, who must and can shape their future. This was also the central message of my speech as an invited speaker.

The European Union is convinced that the Arab-Israeli conflict is at the heart of the problems of the region. Europe has been totally convinced of this fact for some time. For this reason we supported the Mecca Agreement. We see it as a fundamental contribution to bringing inter-Palestinian fighting to an end and for a solution to the conflict, which in turn requires the end of the occupation which began in 1967, the creation of two States and a global arrangement within the region.

We unreservedly support the indefatigable efforts being made by President Mahmud Abbas to achieve the goals of the Palestinian people, in accordance with the principles which he himself has tirelessly repeated, specifically before the General Assembly of the United Nations and more recently on the occasion of the formation of the new Palestinian Government on 17 May last year.

As you are aware, the principles enounced by the President are: observance of the prior agreements between the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority, mutual recognition and the rejection of violence, and a commitment to a negotiated solution.

The European Union has never abandoned the Palestinian people and never will. I sincerely believe that the parallel efforts by the US Secretary of State and the Quartet offer a new opportunity to resolve the conflict. Everybody, including the Europeans, must do what has to be done to seize this opportunity. We could never forgive ourselves if we failed to do so. For this reason, before this Chamber, I call on the Union to commit itself to work as soon and as intensely as possible with the new foreign and finance ministers of the Palestinian government, deploying all necessary resources.

We know them. They have consistently shown themselves to be serious in their intentions. Who would doubt that they would act otherwise now, at a time when their people are being so severely tested. This is the moment for us to commit ourselves to the task and this is what I will tell the Foreign Ministers of the Union when we meet tomorrow in Bremen.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2795TH/2796TH GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL
RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING, LUXEMBOURG, 23-24 APRIL 2007**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council welcomes the Arab Peace Initiative as reaffirmed in the declaration of the Arab League Summit of 29 March and supports it as a major element in moving the Middle East Peace Process forward. The Council welcomes the positive reaction of the Israeli Prime Minister and hopes that a constructive dialogue between Israel and the Arab side on the Initiative will start soon. The EU stands ready to work closely with the special committee and working groups to be established by the Arab League.
2. The EU continues to play an active role notably in the framework of increased Quartet engagement. To this end, the Council looks forward to an early Quartet meeting in the region and to close cooperation with regional partners. It invites the Quartet to lead an effort by the international community for successful negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of the Road Map and to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict.
3. The Council welcomes the intention of President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert to meet on a regular basis. These meetings should contribute to the effective and sustainable improvement of the living conditions in the Palestinian territories and to security. The EU will continue to work closely with the parties including by practical measures regarding access and movement, governance and the security sector. The Council expresses the hope that the meetings between President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert, in the framework of a renewed political process, will soon lead to meaningful negotiations on the final status.
The ultimate goal should be an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security.
4. The EU recalls its readiness to work with and to resume its direct assistance to a Palestinian government whose policy and actions reflect the Quartet principles. In that context, it continues to closely evaluate the policy and actions of the new National Unity Government. It has initiated co-operation with members of the government who accept these principles.
5. The EU stresses the importance of strengthening the Palestinian institutions. It commends the Palestinian Minister of Finance Salam Fayyad for re-establishing the Single Treasury Account. It encourages the minister to undertake further measures to ensure budgetary transparency and has offered its support in that respect.
6. Mindful of the continuing needs of the Palestinian people, the Council endorses the extension of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) for a further three months. It reiterates its call on

Israel for the immediate resumption of the transfer of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues, directly or through the TIM. The Council recalls the utmost importance of the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access. It urges that Rafah and all other crossing points, notably Karni, be re-opened and remain open.

7. The Council calls on the parties to consolidate the cease-fire in Gaza and to extend it to the West Bank. It condemns the continued firing of rockets into Israeli territory and urges the Palestinian leadership to do everything in its power to put an end to such acts. It reiterates its call on the parties to put an end to all acts of violence, and to all activities which are contrary to international law. The EU remains deeply concerned with the continuation of settlement activities, and the ongoing construction of the barrier on Palestinian land.
8. The Council calls for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier and commends efforts, including by partners in the region, to that effect. It also calls for the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators detained by Israel.
9. The Council condemns the kidnapping of BBC journalist Alan Johnston in Gaza on 12 March 2007. The Council demands his unconditional and immediate release.



DECLARATION OF THE EU-US SUMMIT, WASHINGTON, 30 APRIL 2007 [EXCERPTS]

1. 2007 EU-US SUMMIT

We, the leaders of the European Union and the United States of America, met today in Washington to deepen our strategic partnership. This partnership is based on common values, in particular on the deeply shared conviction that peace, prosperity and human development depend upon the protection of individual liberty, human rights, the rule of law, economic freedom, energy security, environmental protection and the growth of strong, democratic societies.

Our partnership has achieved much over the years, and today we have reviewed our work over the past year. Yet we continue to face major challenges, at home and abroad. Consistent with our commitment to work together to advance our shared values and interests, we have today:

- Adopted a framework on transatlantic economic integration which lays a long-term foundation for building a stronger and more integrated transatlantic economy, in particular by fostering cooperation to reduce regulatory burdens and accelerating work on key “lighthouse projects” in the areas of intellectual property rights, secure trade, investment, financial markets, and innovation. We also reaffirm our strong desire to reach a prompt agreement in the WTO Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations that is ambitious, balanced and comprehensive and creates meaningful new trade flows in agriculture, industrial goods and services among and between developed and developing countries;
- Adopted a declaration on political and security issues, including commitments to concrete actions to strengthen liberty, prosperity, security, peace and human rights and address regional challenges, in particular regarding Kosovo, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Iraq, Sudan, Latin America, and efforts to combat terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to work towards visa-free travel for all EU and U.S. citizens by creating conditions by which the Visa Waiver Program may be expanded;
- Adopted a joint statement on energy security and climate change that underlines our mutual interest in ensuring secure, affordable, and clean supplies of energy and tackling climate change. We will broaden and reinforce our activities to improve energy security and reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while supporting economic growth;
- Welcomed the signing of a first stage Air Transport Agreement which is an historic advance in liberalizing transatlantic air traffic. This agreement will bring real benefits for consumers and airline companies on both sides of the Atlantic. We reaffirm our commitment to pursue, as a matter of priority and no later than 60 days after March 30, 2008, negotiations to conclude a second stage agreement in order to achieve further liberalization. [...]

We will continue to work closely together, including through the Quartet, to promote a renewed political process between Israeli and Palestinian leaders with the goal of creating an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security with Israel. We agree on the continuing need for a Palestinian Authority Government committed to the Quartet principles: renunciation of violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations made by the Palestinian Authority, including the Roadmap. The commitment of the National Unity Government to the Quartet principles of peace will be measured not only on the basis of its composition and platform, but also its actions. We are working jointly for the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access and call on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to take the necessary steps. We will continue work to develop an international support mechanism for the Palestinians, with the objective of assisting the population and improving governance, and will pursue efforts to reform and professionalize the legitimate Palestinian security forces to allow them to re-establish law and order and an end to all acts of terrorism.

We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon and support its legitimate and democratically-elected government. We express our appreciation for the constructive mediation efforts aiming at solving the political crisis in Lebanon, in particular those of the Secretary General of the Arab League and Saudi Arabia. We call for the rapid delivery of pledges made at the Paris III Donors Conference, including assistance with political, economic, institutional and security reforms. We call for the rapid establishment of the Special Tribunal on the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri and others, in keeping with UNSCRs 1644 and 1664. The EU and the US call on all parties in the region to fully comply with UNSCR 1701. We commit to assist the Lebanese Government to strengthen security on the Syrian-Lebanese border to prevent the illegal flow of arms into Lebanon, including through technical assistance for Lebanon's border security and customs authorities. We welcome steps being taken to improve coordination and to examine all options for strengthening the UNSCR 1701 arms embargo.

We remain deeply concerned about the role Syria plays within the region and its repression of civil society. We call upon the Syrian government to fully implement UNSCRs 1559, 1595, 1636, 1680 and 1701. Syria must end all interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon and in the region, particularly in Iraq and the Palestinian territories. Our approach to Syria will be based on concrete steps by the Syrian government on all of these fronts, including full Syrian cooperation with the Special Tribunal for Lebanon once it has been established. [...]

We have seen a period of rising tension in the Middle East, including the war between Israel and Lebanon in summer 2006, Iran's continued defiance of the international community in pursuit of its nuclear program and continuing Iranian and Syrian interference in Lebanon and Iraq. But we have also witnessed promising change with the formation of a Palestinian National Unity Government, the relaunch of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and security and reconstruction developments in Iraq. The European Union and the United States have held regular consultations, in particular within the United Nations framework and the Quartet, on the evolving situation.

We welcomed the EU initiative to launch, under the auspices of the Quartet, a Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) to provide direct emergency assistance to the Palestinian people and the €240 million contribution so far into TIM from the European Union. We supported Palestinian President Abbas' efforts to form a Palestinian government whose policy and actions reflect the Quartet principles and will continue to closely evaluate the performance of the new Palestinian National Unity Government in that respect. We also worked to promote implementation of the Security Sector Transformation (SST) plan, including implementation of the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access through the EU Border Assistance Mission to the Rafah crossing, and efforts to improve the Karni/al-Mintar commercial crossings between Gaza and Israel. [...]



JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF THE EU MEMBER STATES, BRUSSELS, 7 MAY 2007 [EXCERPTS]

[...] Middle East

In the Middle-East we have two operations that we are running in agreement with the Palestinian and Israeli authorities.

Our EUBAM Rafah operation, that operates in a particularly complex environment, monitors the only crossing point between Gaza and the outside world. There are lots of difficulties, but we will soon restart the negotiations with the parties for extending this mission. However, we will need to do it with a different term of references. This operation should be seen as another strand of the broadening EU efforts to help the parties reach practical accommodation with one another. Our other operation, EUPOL COPPs, continues to try and re-engage in providing support to the Palestinian Civil Police. Against the odds the Palestinian Civil Police have largely managed to maintain a degree of neutrality in internal Palestinian disputes. EUPOL COPPs will play an important part in providing the technical advice and support needed to build a professional and impartial force as the basis for the rule of law. I think we are close to internal agreement to reengage with the Palestinian Civil Police within the EU, but we now need to move from deliberations to action. I intend to confirm extension of the mission at the end of this month.



JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL, 17TH EU-GCC JOINT COUNCIL AND MINISTERIAL MEETING, RIYADH, 8 MAY 2007 [EXCERPTS]

1. The seventeenth session of the Joint Council established in accordance with the Co-operation Agreement between the European Community on the one hand, and the States of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar and State of Kuwait) on the other hand, was held in Riyadh on 8 May 2007. The GCC delegation was led by H.R.H. Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and President of the Ministerial Council of the GCC. The GCC Secretariat was represented by H.E. Abdulrahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General. The EU delegation was led by Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany and President of the Council of the European Union. The European Commission was represented by Commissioners Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Peter Mandelson.

[...]

7. As regards the Middle East Peace Process, the GCC and the EU confirmed their shared positions not to recognise any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties. The GCC and the EU welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative as reaffirmed in the declaration of the Arab League Summit of 29 March 2007 held in Riyadh, and support it as an important opportunity to move the Middle East Peace Process forward. In this context, they are looking forward to the meeting between the EU and the Arab League designated working group to take place in Brussels on 14 May. They also welcomed the Quartet's intention to work closely with regional partners in that respect. They welcomed the recent efforts undertaken by the Quartet to promote a result-oriented dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the framework of a renewed political process, with the aim of ending the 1967 occupation and creating an independent, sovereign, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security with Israel as a step towards achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East. They welcomed the formation of a Palestinian Government of National Unity pursuant to the agreement reached in Makka on 8 February 2007, which lays the foundation for Palestinian reconciliation. The GCC and the EU reiterated the continuing need to coordinate and mobilize international assistance in support of the Palestinian people and welcomed the continued efforts by the international

community to providing humanitarian relief to the Palestinian population. They called on Israel for the immediate transfer of all withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. The GCC and the EU also recalled the utmost importance of the full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access. They furthermore called for the immediate release of Palestinian ministers and legislators as well as of the Israeli soldier. They stated that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace must meet the legitimate aspirations of both the Israeli and Palestinian people, in line with the relevant UNSC resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map and would include Lebanon and Syria.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2800TH GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 14-15 MAY 2007**

MIDDLE EAST

Ministers, over lunch, had an exchange of views on the Middle East peace process ahead of their meeting with the Arab League.

In a joint informal meeting in the margins of the Council, they met, for the first time, with a delegation of the Arab League composed of the League's Secretary-General, the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, Syria, the Palestinian Authority and Qatar, and a representative from Egypt. The Arab League delegation presented the Arab Peace Initiative to EU foreign ministers. After a discussion, both sides agreed to follow-up the meeting by continuing to work together with a view to supporting efforts towards a settlement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to enhancing cooperation between the EU and the Arab League.

At its 23 April meeting, the Council welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative as reaffirmed in the declaration of the Arab League Summit in Riyadh on 29 March, supported it as a major element in moving the Middle East peace process forward and expressed the EU's readiness to work closely with the Arab League.



**DECLARATION, FINAL COMMUNQUÉ AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE 34TH SESSION
OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS (SESSION OF PEACE,
PROGRESS AND HARMONY), ISLAMABAD, 15-17 MAY 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

ISLAMABAD DECLARATION

1. We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, participating in the Thirty Fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony), having met in Islamabad, Pakistan, and considered the issues facing the Islamic Ummah, declare as follows:
2. We reaffirm our dedication to the noble tenets of our faith that call for peace, tolerance, justice and human dignity and guide our pursuit for progress and prosperity of the Ummah and humanity.
3. We reiterate our solemn commitment to the purposes, objectives and principles of our Organization and recognize that the unity and solidarity of the Islamic Ummah and effective cooperation and coordination among the Islamic countries are vital for prosperity and development of the Ummah.
4. We reaffirm our resolve to realize the vision enshrined in the Makkah Declaration and the Ten-year Programme of Action by effective implementation.
5. We express our determination to continue and speedily finalize the reform of the Organization of the Islamic Conference including its restructuring and drawing up a Revised Charter and strength-

ening its specialized and affiliated organs to enhance its role to effectively meet the challenges of the 21st century.

6. We remain committed to the promotion of global peace and security which can be achieved through just and peaceful resolution of international disputes and ending situations of foreign occupation.
7. We reiterate our firm resolve to continue relentless efforts for a just and peaceful settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict. We welcome the renewal of the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, and the call of the Riyadh Arab League Summit for the early resumption of the peace process on the basis of this Initiative.
8. We also welcome all other initiatives for promoting peace with justice in the Middle East, including the efforts of the President of Pakistan.
9. We reiterate that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds Al Sharif as its capital, liberation of all occupied Arab territories of Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, return of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes and implementation of the Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515 and General Assembly resolution 194 are vital for establishment of peace and security in the Middle East.
10. We also call for a just and comprehensive peace between Syria and Israel based on Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights since June 1967 in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.
11. We emphasize the importance of early restoration of peace and stability in Iraq. We support the continuing efforts for promoting national reconciliation among all the Iraqi people, addressing the causes of violence and terrorism, preserving the inviolability of Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity, accelerating the capacity of the Iraqi security forces, and securing the earliest possible withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq.
12. We emphasize that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon must be fully respected. We extend full support to the Government and people of Lebanon in their reconstruction and rebuilding efforts following the damage caused by Israeli aggression.

FINAL COMMUNQUÉ

[...]

11. The Conference affirmed the necessity of reaching a just solution to the Palestinian cause in all its aspects on the basis of international law and legitimacy and the right of the Palestinian people to self determination and establishing an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. It reaffirmed the necessity of finding a just solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly UN General Assembly resolution 194 (1948). It welcomed the Resolution of the 9th Session of the Arab Summit to activate the Arab Peace Initiative and reiterates its commitment to supporting the Arab Peace Initiative.
12. The Conference reaffirmed its support of the Palestinian National Unity Government and undertakes to provide it with assistance, and to break the unjust siege imposed on the Palestinian people. It commended the Mecca Agreement on Palestinian National Reconciliation which was reached under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and expressed its deep appreciation of the efforts made by the Member States and the OIC Secretary-General in order to reach this Agreement.
13. The Conference strongly condemned Israel for its persistent aggressions on Islamic and Christian holy places, and reaffirms that the Israeli practices are aggressive, hostile, and illegal and constitute a flagrant violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. It condemned Israel for destroying Al-Maghariba Gate Hill, for carrying out the excavations around and beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque, for the deliberate destruction of the archeological and heritage sites in the occupied city of Al-Quds. It called upon the UNESCO to take the necessary steps in order to preserve the historical heritage of Al-Quds (Jerusalem).

RESOLUTIONS ON THE CAUSE OF PALESTINE AL-QUDS AL-SHARIF,
THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, AND THE ISLAMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

RESOLUTION No. 1/34-PAL ON THE CAUSE OF PALESTINE AND THE CITY OF AL-QUDS
AL-SHARIF

The Thirty-fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), (Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony), meeting in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, from 28 to 30 Rabiul Thani 1428H (15-17 May 2007),

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the Cause of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Document No. OIC/ICFM- 34/2007/PAL/SG.REP.);

Proceeding from the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC);

Based on the Islamic resolutions on the Cause of Palestine, the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict;

Recalling the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, particularly resolutions 242 (1967); 252 (1968); 338 (1973); 425 (1978); 465 (1980); 476 (1980); 478 (1980); 681 (1990); 1073 (1996); 1397 (2002); 1435 (2002); and 1515 (2003) and UN General Assembly resolution 194 on refugees, as well as resolution ES-10-10 adopted by the 10th Extraordinary Emergency Session of the General Assembly in 2002 on illegal Israeli practices in the occupied East Jerusalem and the other occupied Palestinian territories, as well as the UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/L15 on the apartheid wall which Israel is building on Palestinian land;

Referring to the resolutions adopted by the UN Human Rights Council relating to human rights violations in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, as well as the resolutions adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the African Union (AU), and the League of Arab States;

Reaffirming the resolutions of the OIC Executive Committee at its Expanded Extraordinary Meeting of 18 November 2006 on the Beit Hanoun Massacre and of 22 February 2007 on the Israeli Aggressions on Al-Aqsa Mosque;

Affirming the Islamic States' commitment to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region;

Emphasizing that the Israeli policies, practices, and expansionist designs threaten not only Arab states and the peace process, but also the Islamic countries at large and jeopardize international peace and security;

Hailing the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and their valiant "*Intifada*" (uprising) aimed at recovering their inalienable national rights, as stipulated in all Arab and International resolutions.

1. *Reaffirms* all the resolutions adopted by the Islamic Conferences and Al-Quds Committee concerning the Cause of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.
2. *Affirms* the necessity of reaching a just solution to the Palestinian cause in all its aspects on the basis of international law and legitimacy and the terms of reference agreed upon, embodied in the relevant UN resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the inadmissibility of acquisition of others' territory by force, the Arab peace initiative and the Roadmap, such as to enable the Palestinian people to achieve their national independence and exercise their sovereignty in their Palestinian State and its capital Al-Quds Al-Sharif.
3. *Affirms* the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation of the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the occupied Syrian Golan and the other occupied Lebanese territories.
4. *Affirms* the illegality of the Israeli laws and practices in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, aimed at annexing, judaizing, and altering the demographic composition and geographic structure of the city. *Demands* States and international institutions and bodies to abide by international resolutions on the City of Al-Quds as an integral part of the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967; and *calls* on them also to not participate in any meeting or activity that serves Israel's objectives in establishing its occupation and annexation of the Holy City.
5. *Reaffirms* the necessity of finding a just solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly UN General Assembly resolution 194 (1948), and *reiterates* its rejection of all forms of settlement, and emphasizes the United Nations' responsibility towards the Palestinian cause and the continued role of the UNRWA in this respect.

6. *Reaffirms* its support of the Palestinian National Unity Government and *undertakes* to provide it with assistance. It *commends* the Mecca Agreement on Palestinian National Reconciliation which was reached under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and *expresses its deep appreciation* of the efforts made by the Member States and the OIC Secretary-General in order to reach this Agreement.
7. *Reaffirms* the Resolution of the OIC Executive Committee at its Expanded Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting on 18 November 2006 to break the unjust siege imposed on the Palestinian people and start initiatives with the international community in order to end the siege and compel Israel to release the tax revenues due to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). It *calls on* countries and international institutions to immediately lift this unjust siege, resume the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people; to support, recognize, and deal with the Palestinian Unity Government without discrimination. It *decides* to make the necessary contacts on this issue with the international parties concerned.
8. *Welcomes* the Resolution of the 9th Session of the Arab Summit to activate the Arab Peace Initiative and reiterates its commitment to supporting the Arab Peace Initiative.
9. *Calls upon* the Quartet Committee to resume serious work in order to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East in accordance with the Roadmap and the Arab peace initiative, to affirm the Palestinian territorial unity and integrity, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to *reject* any changes in the legal status of only a part of this territory, and to *exclude* the option of a State with temporary borders.
10. *Reiterates* its rejection of the Israeli fragmentary solutions and unilateral measures which Israel has adopted or intends to adopt in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including Al-Quds/Jerusalem, through which Israel is trying to preempt the outcome of the negotiations around the issues of the final status, and, ultimately, to redraw the borders in such a way as to fulfill its expansionist designs and intentions, which thus undermines the chances of the emergence of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State.
11. *Invites* the UN Security Council to assume its responsibility in maintaining international peace and security by forcing Israel to put an end to its aggression and occupation of the Palestine and Arab territories and its illegal measures and practices illustrated in the killing and detentions of civilians, collective punishment, and siege and destruction of the Palestinian economy.
12. *Affirms* its condemnation of Israel's continued colonization of the Palestinian territories through all forms of colonial settlement activity, and requests the UN Security Council to see to their immediate ending and prohibition and to remove the existing Israeli settlements in accordance with UNSC resolution 465 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Conference *calls* on the UN Security Council also to reinvigorate the International supervisory and Monitoring Committee in order to prevent settlement in al-Quds and the occupied Arab territories in accordance with UNSC Resolution 446.
13. *Strongly condemns* Israel, "the occupying power", for continuing to build the expansionist wall on Palestinian territories, including the so-called "Jerusalem Envelope" which is aimed dismembering Al-Quds and isolating its population. It *stresses* the paramount importance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued in this connection and the UN General Assembly's decision providing for the need for Israel, the UN Member States, and the UN itself to abide by their legal obligations. It *invites* all States of the world to impose punitive measures against the bodies and companies contributing to the construction of the wall and against settlers, settlement products and all those making profit of any settlement activity on the occupied Palestinian territories, including al-Quds, in implementation of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/15.
14. *Condemns* Israel for destroying Al-Maghariba Gate Hill, for carrying out the excavations around and beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque, for the deliberate destruction of the archeological and heritage sites in the cities of Al-Quds, Nablus, and Al-Khalil. It calls upon the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to take the necessary steps in order to preserve the historical heritage of Al-Quds. It *decides* to take the required steps and make the necessary contacts in order to prevent Israel from including Al-Quds in the Israeli preliminary list of world heritage on the grounds of being in contradiction with international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy.
15. *Strongly condemns* Israel for its persistent aggressions on Islamic and Christian holy places, including the building of a synagogue next to Al-Aqsa Mosque and a Jewish museum, in addition to a

project to build a new railway to link the occupied Arab City of Al-Quds with the settlements as well as the continued settlement activities inside the city and the isolation of Al-Quds by the racist separation wall aimed at Judaizing the city. It reaffirms that the Israeli practices are aggressive, hostile, and illegal and constitute a flagrant violation of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention and calls on the UN Security Council to intervene and take the necessary steps to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque and compel Israel to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy on Al-Quds, particularly Resolutions 253, 267, 271, 465, 476, 478, 6725; Resolution 1073; and UN General Assembly Resolution No. 223/51.

16. *Calls for* strengthened cooperation and coordination with international and regional organizations concerning the cause of al-Quds al-Sharif and Palestine, and *requests* the General Secretariat to organize joint activities with these organizations to support the Palestinian's rights.
17. *Expresses its support* for the continuous efforts and the regional and international contacts of His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, to urge the international community to compel Israel to abide by all relevant UN resolutions.
18. *Reaffirms* the previous resolutions of the Islamic conferences supporting the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and consolidating the steadfastness of its people, and *calls upon* the Member States to support *Bait Mal Al-Quds* and Al-Quds Fund in order to enable them to perform their missions in safeguarding the Arab, Islamic and civilizational character of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and strengthening the steadfastness of its people in countering the continued Israeli measures aimed to Judaizing the Holy City.
19. *Calls on* the Member States which have announced the twinning of their capitals and cities with the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif to promptly sponsor some projects which strengthen the steadfastness of the Holy City, its inhabitants, and its institutions and *urges* the Member States that have not yet announced the twinning of their capitals and cities with the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the capital of Palestine, to take early action to that end in affirmation of the spirit of Islamic solidarity with the Palestinian people.
20. *Condemns* Israel for its detention of the Speaker and Members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and expresses deep concern over the appalling conditions in which Palestinian and Arab detainees are held in Israeli prisons and detention camps. It also *calls on* the international community - represented by international and human rights organizations - to expose the inhuman Israeli practices inside Israeli prisons and exercise pressure on Israel in order to ensure the immediate release of the detainees.
21. *Urges* the international community and the UN Security Council to compel Israel to comply with U.N. resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 487 of 1981, to join the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty, implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) calling for subjecting all Israeli nuclear installations to the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. *Emphasizes* the necessity for Israel to declare its renunciation of nuclear armament and to submit to the UN Security Council and the IAEA a factual statement on its capabilities and stockpile of nuclear weapons and substances, given the fact that those are imperative steps toward making the Middle East a WMD-free area, particularly of nuclear weapons, which is essential to the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the region.
22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution and to report thereon to the 35th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM). [...]

RESOLUTION No. 3/34-PAL ON CONTINUED ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF LEBANON TERRITORIES [...]

The Thirty-fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), (Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony), held in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, from 28 to 30 Rabiul Thani 1428H (15-17 May 2007),

Renewing its commendation of Lebanon's steadfastness and valiant resistance to tyrannical Israeli aggression to which it was subjected in the Summer of 2006;

Recalling the resolutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Islamic solidarity with Lebanon to end Israeli occupation of its territories in the South and the Western Bekaa;

Noting Israel's continued occupation of Lebanese territories and locations on the Lebanese borders, the non-completion of its withdrawal from all Lebanese territories to the internationally recognized

borders, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), its continued aggression against Lebanese territories, its violation of Lebanon's territorial airspace and its stealing of Lebanese water and land;

Deeply concerned about Israel's continued arbitrary arrest of Lebanese citizens in its prisons and detention camps, constituting a flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War and the 1907 Hague Treaty;

Noting with deep concern and perplexity the Israeli Supreme Court's decision that the Israeli authorities can continue to hold Lebanese detainees in Israeli prisons as hostages, bargaining cards and detained without trial;

Recalling the resolutions of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on the travails of Lebanese citizens in Israeli prisons suffering from difficult health conditions leading to the death of some of them;

Affirming the right of Lebanon to reparations over victims and enormous material damage and economic losses suffered due to Israeli aggression against citizens and infrastructure and the attendant harm and massive losses of lives and property:

1. *Pays tribute* to Lebanon's steadfastness and valiant resistance against the tyrannical Israeli aggression to which it was subjected in the Summer of 2006, prays for the soul of Lebanese martyrs, and regards the cohesion and unity of the Lebanese in confronting the aggression as guarantee for Lebanon's future security and stability.
2. *Reiterates* total solidarity with Lebanon and the provision of political, economic support to the Lebanese government in order to preserve Lebanon's national unity, security, stability and sovereignty over all its territory.
3. *Commends* the nationalistic role played by the Lebanese army in the South and in all Lebanese regions on the basis of Lebanese government's decisions and support for the task of this army, as decided by the Lebanese cabinet to extend the sovereignty of Lebanon over all its territory, and extends thanks to brotherly and friendly states for their contribution in strengthening UNIFIL Forces as provided for by Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).
4. *Emphasizes* the need to achieve a firm and lasting ceasefire, *condemns* Israeli violation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), *holds* Israel responsible for these violations, *calls* on the Security Council to assume its responsibility of compelling Israeli to abide by a full ceasefire and to stop its violation of Lebanese sovereignty by land, by sea and by air, and *emphasizes* Lebanon's right against Israeli ambitions to its waters, in accordance with international law.
5. *Welcomes* the seven-point plan submitted by the Lebanese government, and calls on the United Nations Secretary General and the Security Council to take into consideration the Lebanese government's proposal on the Sheba farms region contained in this plan when the UN Secretary General presents, his report to the Security Council, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and calls on all parties concerned to cooperate with the United Nations to find a solution to this problem in a way that will guarantee Lebanon's rights.
6. *Holds* Israel fully responsible for the aggression against Lebanon during the Summer of 2006 and its consequences, and for the deliberate targeting of civilians and infrastructure, which constitutes a flagrant and dangerous violation of international law, in particular the international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Convention, also imposes on Israel the responsibility of compensating the Republic of Lebanon and Lebanese citizens for the direct and indirect heavy losses suffered by the Lebanese economy and people due to the Israeli aggression.
7. *Regards* Israeli actions during its aggression against Lebanon as war crimes whose perpetrators should be tried before specialised international authorities, welcomes the unanimously adopted resolution of the Human Rights Council on 18 December 2006 to commend the report and recommendation of the Investigation Committee established by the Council on 11 August 2006, which condemned the Israeli violation of human rights during the last Israeli aggression against Lebanon.
8. *Extends gratitude* to Member States for expeditiously assisting Lebanon in the areas of relief to victims and reconstruction and for the support they announced during the international conference to assist Lebanon (Paris 3), held on 25 January 2007.
9. *Commends* the international conference to assist Lebanon (Paris 3) gratefully convened by the French government, the important outcomes of the conference as well as the reform and socio-

economic advancement programme paper presented by the Lebanese government in order to modernise and grow the Lebanese economy, boost sustainable growth rate and improve the living conditions of all Lebanese citizens.

10. *Welcomes* the Putrajaya Declaration on the Situation in Lebanon adopted by the special meeting of the OIC Ministerial Expanded Executive Committee held on 3 August 2006 and the efforts of the Chairs of the Islamic Summit and the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in holding this meeting to support Lebanon.
11. *Reiterates support* for Lebanon:
 - a) In its sovereign right to exercise its political choices within constitutional principles and institutions, taking into account its right to establish relations with brotherly and friendly states on the basis of mutual respect of sovereignty and independence, national interests, good neighbourliness, equality and liberality. b) In its demand for the release of Lebanese prisoners and detainees held hostage in Israeli prisons, in contravention of provisions of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1949 Geneva Convention, the 1907 Hague Treaty, and the request to the international community to apply pressure on Israel to release them, and to allow the delegations of the International Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations to visit all Lebanese detainees on a continuous basis to take stock of their situation and provide them with health care.
 - b) In its demand for the removal of thousands of mines left behind by Israeli occupation the planting of which Israel is responsible, causing the death and injury of civilians, on Israel to provide the United Nations with maps of the remaining landmines in the Lebanese territory and the map of cluster bombs network used against Lebanon in July 2006 War.
 - c) In its request to the international community as well as judicial and political bodies to put pressure on Israel to pay reparations to Lebanon for the damages and losses resulting from its occupation and repeated aggressions against the Lebanese territory.
12. *Emphasizes* that, within the framework of Lebanon's interior consensus with the establishment of a court of international character, unravelling of the truth about the terrorist assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and his entourage and other terrorist murders since the assassination attempt of Minister Marwan Hamada, the bringing of the accused person to trial at the said Court, in line with the statute to be adopted for it, within the framework of the approval of the Lebanese people of the statute of the court to be established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1644 and 1664, upon the request by the Lebanese government, in accordance with the Lebanese constitutional principles and regulations so that they can receive their just punishment far from vengeance and politicisation, will contribute to the realization of justice and strengthen Lebanese citizens' belief in their country's freedom and their commitment to their democratic principles and also contribute to the entrenchment of security and stability in Lebanon and the region.
13. *Emphasises* the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and property, and cautions that non-resolution of the question of those of them living in Lebanon on the basis of their return to their homes, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and principles of international law or attempt to settle them, will undermine security and stability in the region and hamper the achievement of just peace there; welcomes the decision of the Lebanese government to reopen the representative office of the PLO and the formation of a work group whose task is to hold talks with representatives of Palestinian side to address the life, social, economic, legal and security issues of the Palestinian refugees inside Lebanese borders in cooperation with the UNRWA.
14. *Considers* just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East as the way to achieve security and stability in the region, and in consequence, *calls* on the international community, in particular the parties to the peace process – the United States, Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, to play a more effective role to ensure the success of the settlement process in accordance with the Madrid Conference and resolutions of international legitimacy, in particular resolutions 242,338 and 425.
15. Proceeding from the emphasis on unity among all sections of the Lebanese people, in order to safeguard the sovereignty, security and independence of Lebanon, to preserve national cohesion among all Lebanese people and out of desire for its stability, which is extremely important for the security and stability of the region, invites all Lebanese sections and political factions to a national dialogue on the basis of commonalities among the Lebanese and on the basis of national

harmony that had been achieved, with a view to reaching solutions that will upstage all those wishing to undermine the security and national stability of Lebanon, *also calls on* all Lebanese people to deploy efforts to arrive at a solution to the current political crisis, confusions and divisions, in order to enable them ward off dangers and enforce the law and its sovereignty over all Lebanese territories, as well as commitment to the Lebanese constitution and the Taif Accord, so as to preserve the security, stability and unity as well as the higher interest of brotherly Lebanon, and emphasises the determination of all Muslim States to provide all forms of support and assistance possible to the brothers in Lebanon to achieve the foregoing in accordance with the resolutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

16. *Requests* the Secretary General to follow up the implementation of this resolution and to present a report thereon to the 35th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

RESOLUTION No. 4/34-PAL ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Thirty-fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), (Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony), Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, from 28 to 30 Rabiul Thani 1428H (15-17 May 2007),

Referring to the Islamic Conference resolutions;

Having examined the grave situation resulting from the continued policies of successive Israeli governments hostile to peace, and their persistent failure to abide by the resolutions of international legitimacy and signed agreements,

1. *Reaffirms* its unwavering full solidarity with the Palestinian people for the recovery of their established and inalienable national rights, including their right to return, to self-determination, and to the establishment of their independent state on their national territory with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.
2. *Reaffirms* the total solidarity of the Member States with Syria and Lebanon to confront the continuous Israeli aggressions and threats against them, and *invites* all the Member States to express this solidarity in a practical manner and by the use of all means, as well as to stand firm with Syria and Lebanon against any Israeli aggressions targeting them.
3. *Reiterates* its adoption of the Arab Peace Initiative for settling the cause of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which was adopted by the 14th Arab Summit held in Beirut (Lebanon) on 28 March 2002; *decides to act* by all ways and means to promote this initiative, explain its dimensions and gain international support for its implementation; and *welcomes* the resolution of the 9th Session of the Arab Summit on activating the Arab Peace Initiative.
4. *Reaffirms also* its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on Israel's implementation of the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, the principle of "land for peace", and the Madrid Conference Terms of Reference, which guarantee Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Syrian Golan, back to the 4th of June 1967 line and from the Lebanese territory still under occupation to the internationally recognized borders as well as securing the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights, including the right to return to their homes and properties in line with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 and to establish their independent state on their national territory with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. No party whatsoever has the right to make any amendment to any of the terms of reference which formed the basis of the peace process as a pretext to renege on their obligations and commitments under these agreements.
5. *Invites* the Quartet to resume its diligent action forth achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of the peace process references represented in the relevant UN resolutions and the two principles of land for peace and the inadmissibility of the appropriation of others' land by the use of force, as well as on the basis of the Arab peace initiative and the Road Map.
6. *Reiterates* the Islamic stand which rejects fragmentary solutions and the Israeli unilateral measures; and *urges* all States and international organizations not to recognize these fragmentary solutions and Israeli unilateral measures or entertain any guarantees or promises that may entail any detraction from the Palestinian people's legitimate rights or reward for the Israeli occupation

which is trying to impose unilateral and segmented solutions through its persistent in expanding settlements and in erecting the Separation Wall in the occupied Palestinian territories including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its surroundings, in violation of the rules of international law and the fundamental references and foundations underpinning the peace process.

7. *Strongly condemns* the Israeli government's policy and practices which are hostile to the peace process and are designed to undermine it through the continued colonization of Arab and Palestinian territories, including the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and also designed to invalidate the foundations and terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference, and evade the obligations, commitments and agreements reached in the past years of peace talks with the Palestinian and other Arab parties.
8. *Invites* the OIC Member States which have already established, or started to take steps to establish relations with Israel in the framework of the Peace Process to sever these relations, including the closing of missions and offices, cutting economic ties and stopping all forms of normalization until Israel meticulously and genuinely implements UN resolutions on the Question of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, until a just and comprehensive peace is established in the region.
9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the 35th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM).

RESOLUTION No. 5/34-PAL ON THE MECHANISM FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The Thirty-fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), (Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony), in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, from 28 to 30 Rabiul Thani 1428H (15-17 May 2007),

Proceeding from the principles and objectives of the OIC Charter,

Referring to the Islamic resolutions on the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly resolution No.9/1-P(IS) adopted by the 9th Islamic Summit Conference held in Doha and the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit held in Makkah Al Mukarramah which was held in December 2005;

Strongly denouncing the unjust siege imposed on the Palestinian people, which has exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Palestine;

Recalling the Resolution of the OIC Executive Committee at its Expanded Extraordinary Session at the Foreign Ministerial Level on 18 November 2006 to break the unjust siege imposed on the Palestinian people;

Condemning the crimes, terrorist practices and oppressive measures carried out by Israel, its insistence on expanding its settlement, its confiscation of land and property, its persistence in implementing collective punishment against the Palestinian people in all the occupied Arab territory, its siege of the Holy City of Al-Quds, and its violation of Islamic and Christians sanctities and values;

Paying tribute to the resolutions adopted by the Extraordinary Arab Summit held in Cairo in October 2000, calling for the establishment of a mechanism for supporting the Palestinian people, for the preservation of the identity of Al-Quds, the consolidation of the autonomous capabilities of the Palestinian economy; further

Recalling the resolutions adopted by the Arab Summits in Beirut (March 2002), Sharm El-Sheikh (February 2003), Khartoum (March 2006), and Riyadh (March 2007) on expanding the resource base of Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds Funds and inviting OIC Member States to join and participate in these two funds;

Commending the just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their national rights, and expressing its determination to support this struggle by all possible means to enable the Palestinians to overcome their predicament and achieve all their objectives;

Urging donor States and financing institutions to provide financial support to boost the resilience of the Palestinian people, to support economic and social development programmes in Palestine, and to extend aid for building a national self-sufficient economy, and to strengthen national institutions.

Expressing its appreciation to those states that have provided assistance to the Palestinian people to help them overcome, their ordeal which has been further aggravated on account of Israel's continued withholding of the amounts due to the Palestinian national authority and the interruption of certain international parties' assistance.

1. *Decides* to break the unjust siege imposed on the Palestinian people and start initiatives with the international community in order to end the siege and compel Israel to release the tax revenues due to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). It *calls on* countries and international institutions to immediately lift this unjust siege, resume the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people; to support, recognize, and deal with the Palestinian Unity Government without discrimination. It also *decides* to make the necessary contacts on this issue with the international parties concerned.
2. *Condemns* the practices imposed by the Israel at the crossing points in the Gaza Strip and West Bank areas, in violation of the provision of the humanitarian international law and the crossing points agreement reached under the patronage of the Quartet. The Conference warns against the foolhardy continuation of imposing such abusive measures which affects the various aspects of the Palestinian people's daily life.
3. *Invites* Islamic financial and economic institutions to partake in the provision of their assistance in all possible forms, to the Palestinian people and to intensify their efforts and programmes to lend financial and technical support in order to enhance the economic capabilities of the Palestinian people's institutions.
4. *Invites* those states and institutions that have suspended their assistance to the Palestinian people following the Palestinian legislative elections, to reconsider their stand and not to penalize the Palestinian people for the results of its democratic elections, and *urges* them to reinstitute their assistance to the Palestinian people and to its national authority and to help them build their country's economy.
5. *In implementation of* the provisions of the Final Communiqué issued by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit, the Conference invites the Member States and the Muslim peoples to support the Al-Quds Fund through the contribution of one US Dollar by each Muslim, so as to assist the Palestinian people in the face of their ordeal and for the maintenance of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Islamic holy places and for the preservation of the Arab-Islamic character of the city of Al-Quds.
6. *Calls on* the Member States to issue a Palestine stamp in pursuance of the relevant Islamic resolutions and to transfer the proceeds generated from it to Al-Quds Waqf Fund in support of the steadfastness of the City of Al-Quds and its Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque.
7. *Commends* the efforts of the Supreme Council and the Administrative Committee of Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds funds and the Islamic Development Bank (DB), both with respect to the management of the Funds and with regard to the management of its own financial resources to activate the financial support mechanisms for the benefit of the Palestinian people, to finance the equipping and construction of health and educational facilities.
8. *Calls on* those Member States which have yet to accede to both Funds to do so and appeals to voluntary institutions and donors to use the technical capacity as well as contracting and payment mechanisms set up by the Islamic Development Bank to finance programmes and projects that would meet the vital needs of the Palestinian people and ensure the spending of these resources in accordance with the best professional standards and practices.
9. *Entrusts* the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank to hold urgent talks so as to seek financial support from those Member States which have yet to announce their intentions to contribute to the two funds.
10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of this resolution and to report thereon to the 35th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM).

RESOLUTION No. 6/34-IBO ON THE ISLAMIC OFFICE FOR THE BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

The Thirty-fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), (Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony), meeting in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, from 28 to 30 Rabiul Thani 1428H (15-17 May 2007),

Proceeding from the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference,

Based on all the relevant Islamic resolutions, in particular Res. No. 6/33-IBO issued by the 33rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers which was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 23-25 Jumad Al-Awwal 1427H (19-21 June 2006),

Mindful of the existing cooperation between the Islamic Office for the Boycott of Israel at the OIC General Secretariat and the Arab Office for the Boycott of Israel at the General Secretariat of the

League of Arab States, for the purpose of achieving optimal implementation of the principles and provisions of the Boycott of Israel,

Having considered the report of the Secretary General on the Islamic Office for the Boycott of Israel,
Decides to:

1. *Invite* the Member States to issue internal legislations to govern the Islamic Boycott action against Israel.
2. *Invite* those Member States that have not set up regional Islamic boycott offices in their countries, to do so as soon as possible, to designate directors for these offices and to nominate liaison officers for them.
3. *Stress* the importance of upholding the Islamic boycott against Israel, as a legal means of pressure to compel Israel to abide by the resolutions of international legitimacy. This demand shall remain in force until the liberation of all occupied Arab territories and the recovery of all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.
4. *Commend* the cooperation existing between the Arab and Islamic Offices for the Boycott of Israel, for the purpose of achieving maximum efficiency in the implementation of the Islamic States boycott of Israel.
5. *Request* the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the 35th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM).



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS DURING A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE
WITH PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, GAZA, 24 MAY 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

I am very pleased to be here in Gaza. I wanted to come to be with you at this moment. I wanted to show solidarity with President Abbas and to be here in person.

We talked about many topics, including the inter-Palestinian violence and the violence between Palestinians and Israel. President Abbas is making huge efforts to find a way to stop the factional violence. He is having meetings with all the factions and all the parties to try to improve the situation. The President is staying in Gaza for as long as it takes.

Tension has been going up too much, it must come down. The rocket attacks against Israel must stop. This violence leads nowhere. I think there is a feeling among Palestinians that violence does not lead anywhere. We need dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, to solve the problems like sensible do.

We talked about economic aid. We will continue to work and try to solve the economic problems the Palestinian people are facing. We also talked about the Rafah border crossing point. This is very important for you, in particular for you the people here in Gaza. We have been asked to stay and we have agreed to do so, to help you as much as we can.

We also talked about Lebanon. I met Prime Minister Siniora on Tuesday in Beirut. I was there to show my support in a difficult moment and to help the Prime Minister in his efforts to calm a difficult situation.

We talked about the region as a whole. We must see how we can calm down the violence and return to a culture of politics and diplomacy.

I want to say that it is a great pleasure for me to be here. My presence in Gaza is a sign of the solidarity of the European Union with the Palestinian people.



STATEMENT BY THE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, JOHN DUGARD, 29 MAY 2007

On Wednesday 30 May 2007 the Quartet, comprising the UN, the EU, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, meets in Berlin to review the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to advance the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians. It meets at a crucial time in the history of the region as there are indications that the events of last summer are likely to be repeated. Already we have seen an intensification of Israeli air strikes into Gaza killing over 50 people and injuring 180, many of whom are civilians, including women and children. This is in response to over 270 Qassam rockets fired by Palestinian militants into the Israeli town of Sderot and the surrounding areas. These rockets have killed two Israelis and injured 16.

The indiscriminate firing of rockets into Sderot violates international humanitarian law. So does Israel's response as it fails to distinguish between civilians and combatants and is a disproportionate use of force. Extrajudicial killings of the kind undertaken by Israel are illegal under international humanitarian law and seem to even fail to meet the minimum requirements for such action laid down by Israel's own Supreme Court in December 2006.

As last year, Israel has reacted to Palestinian action by arresting over 30 Palestinian members of Hamas, including two Palestinian Authority Cabinet Ministers, several legislators and the mayors of Nablus and Qalqilya. Over 40 of those arrested last year still remain in Israeli custody with no prospect of release or being brought to trial. Arrests of this kind are clear acts of collective punishment, in violation of the Geneva Conventions, and undermine the peace process.

These acts must be seen in the context of ongoing violations of human rights by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Military incursions and arrests of Palestinians occur regularly in the West Bank. Settlements continue to be expanded in violation of the Quartet's own Road Map for Peace. Israel continues to construct the wall in Palestinian territory in violation of the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. Some 549 road blocks in the West Bank obstruct Palestinian freedom of movement. Israel continues to withhold taxes and thereby to promote a humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territory. In short Israel remains in serious violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law. Strangely, the Quartet largely ignores this and instead takes action against the Palestinian Authority, as a result of democratic elections in 2006 which brought Hamas to power.

Peace and respect for human rights cannot be brought to the region unless the international community intervenes to persuade, and if necessary, to compel both Israelis and Palestinians to seriously address the issues that stand in the way of an independent Palestinian state. The Quartet is the body chosen by the Security Council of the United Nations for this task. It cannot achieve anything unless it approaches both parties in a fair and even-handed manner. This requires it to treat both parties equally and to accord equal recognition and standing to both parties. The full recognition of the Palestinian Government of National Unity is therefore an indispensable requirement to further peace. This means the recognition of both Hamas and non-Hamas members of the Palestinian Government of National Unity. In order to prevent another season of violence and to protect human rights in the region, the Quartet must intervene immediately in a fair and even-handed manner.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, BERLIN, 30 MAY 2007

The Quartet Principals - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, US 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 - met today in Berlin to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

The Quartet expressed its deep concern over recent factional violence in Gaza. It called for all Palestinians to immediately renounce all acts of violence and respect the ceasefire. It called upon the Palestinian Authority government, in cooperation with President Abbas and regional actors, to do everything necessary to restore law and order, including the release of kidnapped BBC journalist Alan Johnston.

The Quartet strongly condemned the continued firing of Qassam rockets into Southern Israel as well as the buildup of arms by Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza. It endorsed PA President Abbas' call for an immediate end to such violence, and called upon all elements of the PA government and all Palestinian groups to cooperate with President Abbas to that end. The Quartet called for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit. The Quartet urged Israel to exercise restraint to ensure that its security operations avoid civilian casualties or damage to civilian infrastructure. It noted that the detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature raises particular concerns and called for them to be released. The Quartet noted its support for the May 30th Security Council Press Statement on the breakdown of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

The Quartet welcomed continued dialogue between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas, including bilateral summits, and expressed support for US efforts to effect progress on security and movement and access issues. The Quartet agreed that movement and access are essential and in this regard called on both parties to implement fully the Movement and Access Agreement of 15 November 2005. The Quartet urged the parties to work positively and constructively in order to build confidence and to create an environment conducive to progress on the political horizon for Palestinian statehood, consistent with the Roadmap and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, which should also be addressed in these bilateral discussions. Palestinians must know that their state will be viable, and Israelis must know a future state of Palestine will be a source of security, not a threat.

The Quartet commended the excellent work of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) and endorsed its extension for three months from July until September 2007. It called on donors to follow through on past pledges of support. The Quartet noted that the resumption of transfers of tax and customs revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority would have a significant impact on the Palestinian economy. The Quartet encouraged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to consider resumption of such transfers via the Temporary International Mechanism to improve the economic and humanitarian conditions in the West Bank and Gaza. In light of increased regional support for the Palestinians, the Quartet agreed to review where additional donor assistance should be focused, with particular consideration for infrastructure and development programmes that can directly improve the daily lives of Palestinians. The Quartet invited concrete proposals from the parties on specific international support that could be useful at this stage.

The Quartet welcomed the extension of the EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah (EU-BAM). It reiterated the importance of resuming normal operations at the Rafah crossing. Taking note of the continuing threat to Israeli and Palestinian security posed by smuggling, the Quartet welcomed progress in the Quadrilateral Security Committee and called for greater efforts by all parties to improve security along the Egypt-Gaza border.

The Quartet welcomed the re-affirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative, noting that the initiative is recognized in the Roadmap as a vital element of international efforts to advance regional peace. The Arab Peace Initiative provides a welcome regional political horizon for Israel, complementing the efforts of the Quartet and of the parties themselves to advance towards negotiated, comprehensive, just and lasting peace. The Quartet noted its positive meeting with members of the Arab League in Sharm al-Sheikh on May 4, and looked forward to continued engagement with the Arab states. It welcomed the intention of the Arab League to engage Israel on the initiative, and Israeli receptiveness to such engagement. Recalling elements of the April 18 decision by the Arab League Follow-up Committee, the Quartet urged all involved to demonstrate their seriousness and commitment to making peace. In that context, the Quartet reiterated the need for a Palestinian Government committed to nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap, and reaffirmed its willingness to support such a government. The Quartet encouraged

continued and expanded Arab contacts with Israel, and Israeli action to address concerns raised in the April 18 Arab League decision, including a cessation of settlement expansion and the removal of illegal outposts, as called for in the Roadmap.

Looking ahead, the Quartet discussed a calendar for the coming months to support and encourage progress on the bilateral and regional tracks. The Quartet principals agreed to meet in the region in June with the Israelis and Palestinians to review progress and discuss the way forward. The Quartet also agreed to meet in the region with members of the Arab League to follow up on the Arab Peace Initiative and efforts to advance the regional track. Principals instructed the envoys to meet beforehand to follow up and explore options for the way forward.



**UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, LOUISE ARBOUR, STATEMENT
CALLING FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK IN SEARCH FOR A LASTING
SOLUTION BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS, 5 JUNE 2007**

This week marks forty years of occupation of the Palestinian territory, a regime which has led to wide-ranging and serious violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people, first and foremost among them the right to self-determination. The occupation must give way to a lasting political solution allowing both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

In the long-standing search for this solution, however, human rights have for too long taken a back seat. It need not and must not be so. In fact, the protection afforded by international law is most vital in situations of conflict and volatility.

Both flaring crises and longer term resolution of the conflict must be addressed within a framework of international human rights and humanitarian law. This includes the relevant obligations as re-affirmed in July 2004 in the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The right to life continues to be violated within a general climate of impunity in the region. Whether through extrajudicial executions or indiscriminate artillery attacks carried out by the Israeli Defense Forces, or internal Palestinian violence, or indiscriminate Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians, the right to life has been stripped of its fundamental value. What needs to be urgently and concretely addressed is the paramount obligation to ensure protection of civilians in all circumstances. This also means ensuring appropriate redress in situations where such protection has failed.

Furthermore, greater efforts must be made to counter a growing sense of disempowerment among Palestinians throughout the occupied territory. Principal among these, immediate steps can and should be taken to remove obstacles, including settlements, impeding Palestinians' right to freedom of movement: within the West Bank in particular, including Jerusalem, but also between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This right is seriously compromised and has severely curtailed Palestinians' exercise of a wide range of other human rights, including health, education, work and family life. The plight and rights of those imprisoned, captured or otherwise detained - particularly children - should also be urgently addressed.

The international community has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that international human rights and humanitarian law is fully implemented by all in efforts towards a lasting solution. Achieving the highest possible level of respect for human rights in the region is an end in itself. Significantly, however, it can also contribute to building greater confidence among the parties and facilitate the search for a lasting solution. The human rights of Palestinians and Israelis cannot be subject to negotiation or compromise.



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON
FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS ON THE MIDDLE EAST,
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, BRUSSELS, 6 JUNE 2007 [EXCERPTS]**

*[Solana's initial remarks were in made Spanish; the following
are his remarks in response to the comments of the audience.]*

Let me respond to the comments of the parliamentary group leaders. Most of their interventions have essentially followed the line that we have been defending for some time. That is that the moment has come to move on from a policy of crisis management - which is very important but is not sufficient - to a policy, together with crisis management, of conflict resolution. We need to work for a political horizon that will really start to lead to a solution to the conflict that started 40 years ago. That is something that we are trying to do in the coming days.

When I told you that the Quartet met in Berlin last Wednesday I said that, for the first time, the Quartet is committed to starting to work for a political horizon. That means that before the end of this month we will meet - the Quartet as such, together with the Palestinians and the Israelis - in order to push forward the dialogue that is still at a very preliminary stage between President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert. These are the two people who should find the way to peace. It is our obligation to push and to catalyse this process and that is what we are going to do. That is what is written very clearly in the statement issued by the Quartet last Wednesday.

I think that this is a profound change and I would like to underline that because when somebody said: "are we going to wait passively for the catastrophe to arrive?" the answer is no! We are not going to do that, we do not want to do that, you don't want to do that, the people in the region do not want to do that. Therefore, the leaders of the Quartet are trying to push forward this mechanism to move on towards a resolution.

A few other ideas were raised by the parliamentary group leaders. There is the question of an international force. Let me say that for the first time in many, many years, the idea of an international force is not off the agenda. It has, as you know, been presented by members of the Knesset saying that the time may have come to call for an international force, which could, at least in the beginning, have a peacekeeping role, patrolling the border in the south, in the so-called Philadelphi Corridor where, as you know, the Rafah border crossing point is located. The Israelis are also considering that possibility, as are the Palestinians and the Egyptians, with differing intensity. This clearly needs further discussion.

This links up with what Mrs Napoletano said about the success of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The fact that an international force - whose backbone is European, as you know - has been responsible for the application of the UN Security Council resolution has led some in the Israeli government and in the Knesset and in Israel as a whole to think that a model of that nature could perhaps also be applied elsewhere. So, we have to link all the issues together.

What we have learned from our presence in Lebanon is that it may be possible to apply the model elsewhere, perhaps to provide a monitoring presence which would be absolutely necessary if we want to the peace process to come to fruition.

I would like to emphasise again, as regards Lebanon, that the United Nations Security Council Resolution on the creation of the tribunal is very important. The reaction to it has been very negative in Syria but the international tribunal is not against any person or any country. It is a tribunal to be set up in order to determine who is responsible for the killing of a good man, a friend of many of ours, Mr Hariri, who was assassinated in a manner that has to be clarified if we want to have peace and reconciliation in Lebanon. The European Union will therefore be working for that.

I would like to say once again that what we have done, working very determinedly, to mobilize the Quartet in the direction that it is taking now is something that has many fathers and many mothers but

you can be sure that the Europeans have been working very hard from the very beginning to arrive at this point. Let us hope that we are able to continue working in that direction. I hope to have in the coming period of time, which will be difficult, the support, help and understanding of the European Parliament.

In response to further comments during the debate by Members of the European Parliament, let me say that we are debating a very important issue, the Middle East, and that although the situation is very difficult, this is a time of hope, which has not existed for a long time. I have been involved in the Middle East for many years. I was at the Madrid Conference and at the last Camp David Conference. And not since Camp David have I perceived us to be any closer than I feel we are today to the beginning of a real, meaningful communication and exchange and therefore to the beginning of a political horizon.

There are three reasons for this: one is the Arab League Initiative, which we did not have at the time of Camp David. Secondly, 40 years have elapsed. I think everybody is exhausted, psychologically, physically and politically. Out of this exhaustion, I think that we have to muster new psychological and political energy in order to move forward. And, thirdly, we have a mechanism, the Quartet, comprising the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and the Russian Federation.

For the first time, we have the United States and the European Union at the same negotiating table with the parties.

I believe that all these elements change the horizon. We must try to move on, and not to falter. We cannot achieve a solution to all the problems in 24 hours, or by the end of the month. But we have the opportunity to move the peace process forward.

And, as a final thought, I want to stress that we must be proud of ourselves, as members of the European Union. If you go to Palestine, as you do, you hear criticism. But probably, if you really talk in depth to the Palestinians and Israelis, you will find a growing sympathy and understanding for the way in which the Europeans are doing things. I think that we Europeans have to recognize this every now and then. Otherwise we will never move forward collectively, as we need to do.

Moving this process forward is an effort for everybody. We have an opportunity. Let us see whether, next time we meet, we see progress. We will not see the solution but let us see whether we make progress.



PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS, STATEMENT CALLING FOR PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI PEACE (“FLORENCE DECLARATION”), FLORENCE, 13 JUNE 2007

The Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations and individuals committed to peace, justice and freedom in their troubled region, have gathered in Florence, Italy on June 11-13, 2007 under the auspices of the government of the Tuscany Region to seek Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement and to promote coalition building with Europe aimed at ending the occupation and furthering peace and coexistence.

The meeting was over shadowed by the tragic events in Gaza which adds another dimension to the suffering of the Palestinian people. The participants urge for an immediate stop of the violence.

In cooperation with the regional government of Tuscany, the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum has moved forward in order to influence both the rhythm and the pace of the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, through organizing this significant Civil Society Peace Summit, aiming to establish a wide coalition of Israeli-Palestinian-European peace forces, that will work in coordinated effort to pressure governments for the urgent renewal of political negotiations, with the objective of ending the occupation, establishing an independent and viable Palestinian state, based on 4 of June 1967 borders, side by side with Israel and ending the conflict.

Never before, has the time for peace become so short. We are on the edge of the precipice. Accordingly, the reaction of civil societies on both sides of the conflict comes at a time when there is a stalemate at the negotiation level, lack of strong political leadership, and public apathy towards a political horizon. Our action intends to build trust and cooperation at the grassroots level as a first step in the building of a broader peace movement that will include the social, economic, cultural and political sectors of both societies, towards reconciliation. The summit, after three days of deliberations, concluded with the adoption of the following basic positions and proposed actions:

- Stressing the role that civil society organizations can play in creating the conditions for the promotion of Palestinian-Israeli peace process,
- all participants commit themselves to the achievement of a comprehensive, lasting and just peace between Palestine and Israel, based on UN resolutions that call for ending the occupation and for the establishment of two states through political negotiations, and
- accept the Arab Peace Initiative as a basic framework for peace negotiations, and call to stop any unilateral action, including settlement expansion, building the wall on the Palestinian territories, and all unilateral measures in east Jerusalem that will jeopardize the two state solution, and
- call for a comprehensive cease-fire which when achieved, will set favorable conditions for the renewal of the stalled negotiations.

We call on Europe – the European Union, National and Regional Governments and civil society - to become actively involved in the collective search for Israeli-Palestinian peace, and to develop determination for achieving this objective. At the same time, the participants commit themselves to work together to turn this summit into a permanent European-Israeli-Palestinian Alliance for peace, by establishing a Tripartite Steering Committee. The TSC will be composed of the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum, European NGOs and the Regional Government of Tuscany that will develop its own structure and to oversee an action plan and mechanisms for its implementation, based on the attached agreed-upon recommendations made by the different working groups. The TSC will work to identify and mobilize the required resources needed for the implementation of the action plans. The TSC should seek to attract to it further Arab, regional and international participants, at governmental – national, regional and local, private sector, and civil society levels to be incorporated into the Peace Alliance.

We recognize the efforts made and the commitment on the government of the Tuscany region, to build a network of regional and local authorities in Europe aimed at promoting cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians and to hold an annual conference of the Peace Alliance. The participants would like to extend their thanks and appreciation to Mr. Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister of Italy, and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their participation and interest, and extends special thanks to the Government of the Region of Tuscany for its contribution and commitment to Israeli-Palestinian peace in general and to the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum in particular.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, 16 JUNE 2007

Following is the text of the statement by the Quartet Principals - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. 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 - on their June 15 telephone call.

In a telephone call on June 15, Quartet Principals shared their deep concern over the welfare and security of all Palestinians - especially those in Gaza, whose lives have been most seriously affected by the ongoing crisis. The Quartet expressed its support for efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of Palestinians and called for respect for the human rights of all those in Gaza and the safety and security

of international workers. It called for an urgent end to the violence, and the cooperation of all parties to ensure appropriate security and access conditions for the passage of humanitarian goods and personnel both within the Gaza Strip and at key crossing points.

The Quartet expressed understanding and support for President Abbas' decisions to dissolve the Cabinet and declare an emergency, given the grave circumstances. The Quartet recognized the necessity and legitimacy of these decisions, taken under Palestinian law, and welcomed President Abbas' stated intention to consult the Palestinian people at the appropriate time. The Quartet noted its continuing support for other legitimate Palestinian institutions.

The Quartet supports the efforts of responsible regional states to help calm the situation, and will continue to promote a negotiated, comprehensive, just and lasting Middle East peace in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2809TH EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING,
LUXEMBOURG, 18 JUNE 2007**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council expresses its deep concern regarding the extremely serious events in Gaza. The Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the violent coup perpetrated by Hamas militias, in particular attacks against and the destruction of the legitimate security services of the Palestinian Authority, the summary execution of many of its members, the attacks against hospitals and the cruel treatment of captives. The Council deeply deplores the loss of human life, including civilians and humanitarian workers. The Council calls for the immediate cessation of all violence and hostilities, including in the West Bank, and for the restoration of law and order. All those responsible for criminal acts in violation of the standards safeguarded by international humanitarian law and of fundamental human rights must be held accountable.
2. The Council supports the Arab League's call for restoring Palestinian National unity and the unity of Palestinian territory. The Council also supports ongoing efforts by the Egyptian government to mediate a cease-fire. It appeals to all the countries of the region to join these efforts and to help stop the supply of weapons to the militias.
3. In calling for an urgent political solution of the crisis, the EU expresses its full support for President Abbas and his decisions taken within his mandate to declare a state of emergency and to install an emergency government for the Palestinian Territories under Prime Minister Fayyad, underlining the importance of the Palestinian basic law. All Palestinian parties should abide by his decisions. It recalls that reconciliation and national unity behind the programme of peace articulated by President Abbas is the only way to achieve Palestinian national goals.
4. Gravely concerned by the critical humanitarian situation in Gaza, the EU will do its utmost to ensure the provision of emergency and humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza, whom it will not abandon. Unimpeded access to humanitarian aid deliveries must be guaranteed. The extension of the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) for a further three months until September 2007 will also contribute to the emergency relief. The EU calls on Israel to facilitate the provision of humanitarian help.
5. The Council reiterates its call on Israel for the immediate release of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues.
6. The EU will resume normal relations with the Palestinian Authority immediately. With this objective, the EU will develop the conditions for urgent practical and financial assistance including:
 - direct financial support to the government;
 - support to the Palestinian Civilian Police through the resumption of EUPOL COPPS;
 - the resumption of the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Rafah;
 - intensive efforts to build the institutions of the future Palestinian state.

7. In the current circumstances it becomes all the more urgent to take forward a credible peace process which can give the Palestinian people the perspective of an independent, democratic and viable state living side by side with Israel, and bring peace and stability to the Middle East.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH BEFORE THE
PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING, RAMALLAH, 20 JUNE 2007**

[The following text is the unofficial translation of Abbas' speech.]

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful,

I looked for an appropriate verse from the Holy Qur'an and I found the following verse:

“Because of this, we wrote about the sons of Israel that whoever kills a human life or whoever spread corruption on earth, it is as if he killed all human beings and whoever saves one life, it is as if he saved the lives of all human beings”

This verse applies today, what they did against their own people in terms of killing and dispersion and slaughtering and destruction against their own people.

My dear sisters and brothers,

We meet today in the context of the PLO Central Council in its capacity as the highest Palestinian authority in the absence of the Palestinian National Council. This meeting will have a historical role and importance as our national projects is being subjected to a clear attack that aims to destroy it; this project which we laid down its pillars with blood and sacrifices for the last forty years.

It is the project of regaining the unity of the people and homeland through the return of the dispersed people to their homeland and the establishment of a Palestinian independent state with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital and so that this state can have democratic pillars that allow our people to grow and develop and to keep up with the modern developments and progress in the world and to end ignorance and close-mindedness and to give the next generations a chance to live a free and dignified life.

We have struggled along with the past generations against the occupation and against the dispersion and disunity of our homeland and people. This struggle escalated under our national flag which was raised by the heroes of the 1936 Revolution and who protected this flag with their lives and they defended our right to live in our homeland under the leadership of martyr Abdul Qader Al-Husseini in 1948, and this flag was raised by the great leaders and strugglers who fired the first bullet at the start of our contemporary national revolution under the leadership of Yasser Arafat since 1965.

This flag is being trodden under the feet by groups which considered the Palestinian national project that we protected one generation after the other as contradicting with their dark project; they replaced the Palestinian flag with their factional flag which has no connection with the history of our people and their struggle and sacrifices. Then, they moved even further to insult every national symbol of our struggle symbols, including the home of the leader martyr Yasser Arafat and the leader martyr Abu Jihad and they also destroyed the statue of the Anonymous Soldier's Site in the center of Gaza city; this statue which points in its finger towards Jerusalem; this anonymous soldier who is the symbol of the sacrifices of the martyrs and Palestinian strugglers and the unity of the Palestinian, Egyptian and Arab blood.

What can I say to respond to such insults to our national heritage and values; I can only say this verse:

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful,
Don't be like those who breached their vows and promises

We are one homeland for one people. I tried using all methods, including the continuous dialogue before, during and after Mecca Agreement with patience to solve the internal problems and to prevent the dangers of the civil war and protect the Palestinian blood and institutions so that the democratic process can proceed and so that this homeland won't face another Nakba that can give the occupation another chance to continue with its schemes to prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the borders of 1967.

I always remained silent in front of the wounds they caused and I made concessions that many didn't approve and all of this just because I wanted to avoid reaching a dark future that can threaten our national soil and the future of our national project. We all remember how we worked since the national reconciliation document until we reached to Mecca Agreement in order to find common denominators that can open room for unity to prevail over disunity.

But the scheme of separating Gaza from the West Bank and the establishment of a semi-state consisting of one color controlled by one wing which is known for its fanaticism and extremism. This scheme was prepared for at the military and political levels through the establishment and expansion of an armed militia belonging to this wing alone which was planning to seize the authority in our beloved Gaza Strip.

I preempted this scheme by calling for dissolving the Executive Force because it is illegitimate and because it prevents the security services from performing their duties and because it reflects coup intentions against the PNA institutions, and I used to call for merging this force in our existing security institutions and apparatuses and in further confirmation on our good intentions, I agreed to include the members of the Executive Force in the security services although this was violation to some provisions of the law and I did this to close all doors in front of excuses and to prevent the tension that can lead to the explosion.

During that period, the series of assassinations continued against the cadres and commanders of the security apparatuses and its various institutions and against the leaders and cadres of Fatah Movement in Gaza Strip. We witnessed acts of murder and executions that we have never seen before throughout our history and all of these acts were executed on the basis of accusing others of treason and unfaithfulness and on the basis of exclusion and the operations of hateful incitement and inciting emotions and barbaric instincts.

I worked recently on establishing a joint operations room that included everybody without any exception and we started to conduct changes in the command of the security services to enable them to perform their duties in an efficient manner. But the preplanned scheme which was approved by Hamas leadership inside Palestine and abroad and with regional parties came to block our attempts to prevent the disaster and tragedy. On this occasion, I want to go back in time a little and remind everyone that after we formed the government and we brought a person who claims that he is independent who is Hani Al-Qawasmī as Interior Minister and I remember I told him in the presence of the PM: what do you want to do? He said: A security plan to clean up the Strip from the security chaos. I told him in front of everyone: all the security apparatuses are at your disposal, then he set up many demands and I agreed to all of his demands because he was threatening that he would resign. I agreed to all his demands because I wanted matters to move forward and to have real action to fight the security chaos. After we concluded all matters, and he was supposed to start with the operation the next day, he announced his resignation and he said he doesn't want to work. I said then: the PM will assume the Interior Ministry Portfolio and let work start, but unfortunately work started with assassinations, strikes and killing everywhere to execute their scheme.

And who is saying that we set up the obstacles, we overcome all the obstacles in order for the national unity government to succeed and to give a model that there is a national unity government but they were hiding themselves behind their scheme.

These groups attacked the headquarters of the national security forces, the intelligence apparatus, the preventive security apparatus and the presidential guard forces and atrocities were committed and

these acts are strange to our heritage and traditions in terms of the killings and executions in the streets and throwing strugglers from rooftops. They also executed acts of looting against the security institutions and headquarters and against NGOs and against Christian institutions and even churches were attacked; a church was looted and burnt in Gaza and this church is one of the oldest churches in Palestine and this church existed in Palestine even before our presence in Palestine; there were churches and Christians who lived there and they are our brothers, now we discover that they are our enemies and that they have to leave; this explained what happened in the churches and this is the least that we can say: this is disgraceful to the Palestinian people and it is disgraceful for those who committed these acts; it is shameful for those murderers who attacked homes of hundreds of cadres of the Authority and homes of innocent civilians and against the symbols of the national sovereignty, including the Presidential Headquarters and other posts. After they occupied and destroyed the looted the presidential headquarters, some thugs sat in the offices; they said it is possible to hand over Al-Muntada to some people; but we say no dialogue with those murderers; I don't know in our history any force or group that kills its own people and violates their homes and properties and insults their national symbols like these groups did in Gaza during that black week.

Why did all this happen? And under what religion was it committed? God forbid to say that these acts were done in the name of religion; the religion is innocent of such acts and of such people because Islam calls for tolerance and compassion and calls for freedom; this is not Islam. This is strange and far away from Islam; Islam is innocent from such acts or cause or sect. This happened against the courageous and steadfast Gaza and it happened only to satisfy the sick dream of establishing the Emirate of darkness and ignorance and to control by force the lives and thoughts and future of 1.5 million members of our great people in Gaza Hashem.

Those who tried to simplify matters and picture this as a conflict between Fatah and Hamas are wrong. It is a conflict between the national project and the militias' project: between the one homeland project and the project of the Emirate or the semi-state; between a project that aims to impose its conditions by force and to establish their own closed system and a project that depended on democracy, dialogue and national participation as means to solve disputes; between those who resort to assassinations and killings and executions and planning conspiracies to achieve their factional purposes and those who resort to the rule of the law and who show concern and save the unity of the homeland and people.

I pose here to say that one month ago, I received news that Hamas Movement planted a mine in Salah Eddin Street and that when I pass in that area, they will blast the mine and this information is confirmed by the security services but they lacked precise information on the exact location.

But I went to Gaza in my last visit and I am a believer and I don't care and I traveled there and insisted to go to Gaza and while I was there, a videotape came to me from Hamas, from parties inside Hamas, from one person in Hamas; I saw the tape and I saw in that tape six persons with their faces showing clearly and they wore Hamas signs and they were talking and they were dragging a mine weighing no less than 250kgs and pushing it under the ground; till here, one can say that this was planned for the Israelis and that they want to plant it there as precaution; they were digging and pushing it in the ground and they said in the tape: this is for Abu Mazen; this is for Abu Mazen; this is for Abu Mazen and the next one will be for the Preventive Security Apparatus. This tape had image and sound and the faces are known and the people are known and for those who want to see it, I sent the tape to Khaled Masha'al in Damascus, he denied at first even before he watched the tape and I was sure of the messenger who brought the tape to me and they sent it to Khaled Masha'al so that he can give them the exact time to blast the mine.

This is a case I sent to all Arab countries and non-Arab countries to see the level of criminal acts of this dark groups which aims to execute the coup.

Today, I address our great people in Gaza and I tell them that the coup project won't last long and has no future and will become a painful part in the memory as soon as possible. But we will work with you our people in Gaza so that our people in Gaza can avoid the pain and suffering resulting from this

treacherous coup. We will exert all efforts to prevent the economic, financial or humanitarian siege and we will continue to show our commitment towards our people who show concern for the unity of the people and homeland and who refuse to make any compromises on the unity. Don't feel sad; you will prevail eventually.

Within this context, I affirm our total rejection to any Israeli attempt that aims to exploit the acts committed by that group in Gaza and tighten the siege on our people in Gaza. This group that committed the coup placed their own factional interests as a priority at the expense of the interests of the people and homeland; they offered the best opportunity for all those who want to separate Gaza from the West Bank and they offered this chance for those who are working to punish an entire people because of the stupid and short-sighted acts of one group.

They can spend the funds on themselves just like they did during their government and after that they will leave the people to their own fate and they will do this; many funds arrive from many sources and they use these funds and they say: let the people go to hell. This is not the first time.

We are responsible for our entire people and for the unity of the homeland and for providing food for every individual there. As for those who plant the seeds of blind hatred and bloody splits, we will hold them accountable according to the law which will continue to cling to indefinitely. We will not act like them and we will not march in their dark alleys; we are civilized and democratic; any person who commits a crime will face trial; I will not say like them: "in killing you, I will enter paradise; and in killing your family and children, I will enter paradise". This is not our style and this is not part of our civilization and we will never accept this.

We have reached a new juncture where the previous calls for dialogue became useless; this coup has to end in all its forms, including the dissolution of the Executive Force which is the tool that executed the coup and we announced in a presidential decree that this force is an outlaw. Hamas leadership must apologize to the Palestinian people and to the PLO for the bloody coup crime they committed. They have to hand over all the PA institutions and its centers and headquarters to the new legitimate government of one unified Palestine and to work according to the decisions of this government on the basis of the law with regards to the violations, crimes, executions, looting and other violations that are still happening until this day in Gaza Strip.

I want to affirm at the same time that we are moving in our path towards the future and this group will not obstruct our work and will not succeed in derailing us from working to accomplish the freedom to our people and to ensure the security and safety of our people and their children and to enable them to get rid of the chains of poverty, deprivation, economic deterioration and unemployment.

For this purpose and in order to prevent this group from achieving its goals in disuniting the homeland and in order to stop them from inciting part of the people against another part and to prevent them from planting the seeds of continuous and permanent civil war, we discharged the former government and we declared a state of emergency and we formed a Palestinian national government consisting of independent national competent people headed by my brother Sr. Salam Fayyad so that it can assume its responsibilities in implementing a national program with security of the citizens as its basis and to secure dignified living conditions to the entire people in all parts of the homeland in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem.

The formation of this government in this way came to affirm that we reject monopoly of the authority by one faction or group and to demonstrate that our Palestinian society which possesses potentials and qualified people is capable of producing a government that can protect its interests and that can end as soon as possible the crisis, collapse, poverty, famine and sabotage of the institutions.

The new government assuming its security responsibilities and its mission to secure dignified living conditions is the clear response to the coup and it is a proof that our people deserve to establish their independent state on their national soil and to build a new life full of hope and confidence that can provide development, prosperity to our children, men and women.

We affirm that enforcing the law and rule of the law and security will not remain a slogan in all parts of the homeland despite the abnormal situation in Gaza Strip. Our main goal is to prevent moving the internal fighting into the West Bank and the main goal is to implement the security plan and end the era of militias so that we will only have one sole weapon which is the legitimate weapon of the authority and to prevent any aggressions or violations from any party and to deal with the citizens on the basis of abiding by the law and not to punish people according to their affiliations or ideas and to allow people to exercise their individual, political, social and religious rights as long as this is done in accordance with the law.

We must give utmost importance to building and developing the police apparatus in line with building and developing the judiciary apparatus and to enable it to restore respect to the law. This is a vow we make: we will build an advanced independent judicial system as soon as possible.

I want to affirm that the schools, colleges and universities will only be places for education and enlightenment and not centers for ignorance and dark thoughts and nucleus to spread hateful thoughts that disperse and disunite the people and their social fabric. The mosques also need to be supported and developed so that they remain places for worship only and places to pray for God and not become centers for political propaganda and exploitation for any party or a warehouse for weapons of places for interrogating people.

Palestine with its Muslim and Christian people and with its various colors will remain an oasis of pluralism and respect of all ideologies and equality between the citizens in their rights and duties. We live in the country of the Nativity and the Isra' (related to Prophet Mohammed) and no one can derail us from this commitment.

The PNA was established based upon a decision from the Palestinian Central Council which commissioned the PNA to run the affairs of this part of the homeland until accomplishing the independence and the establishment of the independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. In front of these dangerous developments that face our national project, your respectful council here is called upon to take the decisions that support its previous decision on establishing the PNA and that can protect it from the threats and dangers.

The Palestinian Central Council is called on to remain in open permanent session so that it can contribute to bear the responsibilities of confronting the coup project and to denounce it from all ranks of our people. Your respectful council is also called on to support the PNA decisions, especially in facing the coup and in preventing it from achieving its goal to disunite the homeland and through supporting the new government and to stress that all the PLO institutions and communities of our people inside the homeland and in the Diaspora will provide this government with all trust and support and national and popular and legal support.

There is a need to discuss the conditions in the PNA institutions, especially the PLC, and to see to what level it is assuming its responsibilities despite the difficult conditions it passed through and despite the fact that Israel arrested a large number of its members.

But this is not excuse for not assuming its role and for obstructing its work for a period more than six months because its speaker house and Hamas members boycott its meetings and prevent it from holding the sessions. It is also necessary to discuss seriously the activation of the role of the PLO Executive Committee and to see that it holds regular meetings and to apply its decisions and to discuss expanding its membership according to its bylaws and to activate and develop the role of the PLO departments, especially towards the refugees' communities inside and outside Palestine.

We must work on reestablishing the Palestinian National Fund Board of Directors and commission the Executive Committee with this task and provide the funds needed so that it can assume its role in developing the performance of the PLO and its institutions.

There is a need for the continuation of the role of the National leadership committee to work on activating the PLO and to prepare to hold a meeting with the participation of the PLO Executive Committee and the representatives of the Palestinian national factions with the exception of Hamas.

We are enemies with nobody and we don't exclude anyone but these people betrayed the trust and executed their coup against the legitimacy and these not worthy of any dialogue and there we say from here: No dialogue with those regardless of the price.

We have to point out here that we are following up efforts to end the siege imposed on our people and our authority, especially after the formation of the new government and there are positive indicators in this area.

But this is not enough, because ending the financial siege must be accompanied with ending the internal siege and in removing the checkpoints and barriers at the entrance to cities that impede national and economic life; these checkpoints must be removed so that the PNA can execute its security tasks in the best possible manner. This is why we called for implementing the security project that was presented to us by international parties recently to end the internal siege on our people and their cities and villages.

This must be accompanied with complete halt of settlement activities and halt of the construction of the apartheid wall; we reject the wall and we will continue to reject it. We reject the state with temporary borders. We have to talk so that there won't be any miscommunications or vagueness, and let us listen to the projects of Ahmad Yousef who cooked this project in a certain country. He says: The state with temporary borders and we grant Israel a truce between 10 to 15 years and then we can think about ways to Jerusalem and the refugees issue comes later. These are the projects that they are cooking now but our people will not allow them and we will not allow them with such treasons that they started earlier.

What is happening inside Al-Quds Al-Sharif and around it are violations that exceeded all lines and their consequences will prevent the establishment of the two state solution which enjoys a consensus among all members of the international community.

We called and we affirm today our call for the need to launch negotiations over the final solution and we believe that the current conditions don't prevent at all the start of such negotiations within the context of an international peace conference.

On the issue of international protection and bringing in international troops and observers, this is under discussion in our circles from all its political and legal aspects and to see to what extent it serves our national interests.

I would like to thank our Arab brothers for their support to the Palestinian legitimacy and the new government wishing under the current conditions to see them contribute to reinforcing the role of legitimacy through honoring the commitments made in the Arab Summit and to stand against all poisonous campaigns and the media campaigns that aim to distort the role of our national authority and its positions and its balanced policies.

I would like also to thank the international community with all its countries and institutions which expressed support to the Palestinian legitimacy and to the government of brother Dr. Salam Fayyad and which affirmed on the end of the siege imposed on our people. We wish that the international community would put all its weight to exert pressure towards the end of the continuous aggression against our people. Today, there were six martyrs in Gaza and Jenin by the occupation troops and this matter threatens with renewal of the cycle of violence.

We also hope that the international community and the international Quartet Committee would contribute in particular to work towards holding an international peace conference so that Palestinian-Israeli negotiations can take place under its umbrella.

My dear sisters and brothers,

We are a people who can rise above the wounds and we will stand tireless in front of the crises and we will protect our independent national decision despite all attempts to attack it and we will continue to defend the interests of rights of our people wherever they are. We affirm to our brothers in the

wounded Nahr Al-Bared Camp that we will remain loyal to the vow and we will work on rebuilding the camp and prevent their dispersion another time in close cooperation with the brothers in Lebanon and we have we will continue to consider the security of Lebanon as part of our security and we will exert all our efforts to prevent all attempts of using our camps to abuse that security.

It is well known my dear brothers that what happened in Nahr Al-Bared and it might happen in other camps and they want to link it with the Palestinians so that they can say that there is a problem between the Palestinians and Lebanese people but the truth was revealed and the problem is not between Palestinians and Lebanese but between Palestinians and Lebanese on one hand against those who attacked and we don't know where they want to take the security of Lebanon, we reject this phenomenon and our position towards the Lebanese people is unified and we salute the Lebanese people and army who are protecting their lands and their sovereignty.

I appeal to the souls of martyrs and to the wounds of the injured and to their families and the recent martyrs who defended legitimacy against the forces of darkness and coups, I affirm to all of them that the independent Palestine that they dreamt about and they sacrificed for is coming for sure. And we will continue to protect their memories and sacrifices as long as we live.

I also appeal to my brothers in the occupation prisons including leaders and strugglers of the national action factions and the PLC members who are prisoners also and all strugglers expressing pride and appreciation for the position of thousands of prisoners who condemned the bloody coup and who called for the end of all its forms and we will continue to work to free all prisoners regardless of their affiliations and their freedom is coming for sure.

As long as we are in authority we are responsible for the entire people, including those who oppose us and those who support us, even those who fought against us and we are responsible even for those people to prevent them from their darkness and killings based on the law and Islamic Law.

Palestine will remain the homeland for all its people inside and abroad.

We will cling to this slogan: one homeland for one people. Peace be upon you and thank you.



**STATEMENT BY THE QUARTET REGARDING THE QUARTET
REPRESENTATIVE, WASHINGTON, DC, 27 JUNE 2007**

Quartet Principals noted that recent events in Gaza and the West Bank make it more urgent than ever that we advance the search for peace in the Middle East. The Quartet reaffirms its objective to promote an end to the conflict in conformity with the Roadmap and expresses its intention to redouble its efforts in that regard. The urgency of recent events has reinforced the need for the international community, bearing in mind the obligations of the parties, to help Palestinians as they build the institutions and economy of a viable state in Gaza and the West Bank, able to take its place as a peaceful and prosperous partner to Israel and its other neighbors.

To facilitate efforts to these ends, following discussions among the Principals, today the Quartet announced the appointment of Tony Blair as the Quartet Representative. Mr. Blair, who is stepping down from office this week, has long demonstrated his commitment on these issues.

As Quartet Representative, he will:

- Mobilize international assistance to the Palestinians, working closely with donors and existing coordination bodies;
- Help to identify, and secure appropriate international support in addressing, the institutional governance needs of the Palestinian state, focusing as a matter of urgency on the rule of law;

- Develop plans to promote Palestinian economic development, including private sector partnerships, building on previously agreed frameworks, especially concerning access and movement; and
- Liaise with other countries as appropriate in support of the agreed Quartet objectives.

As Representative, Tony Blair will bring continuity and intensity of focus to the work of the Quartet in support of the Palestinians, within the broader framework of the Quartet's efforts to promote an end to the conflict in conformity with the Roadmap. He will spend significant time in the region working with the parties and others to help create viable and lasting government institutions representing all Palestinians, a robust economy, and a climate of law and order for the Palestinian people.

Tony Blair will be supported in this work by a small team of experts, based in Jerusalem, to be seconded by partner countries and institutions.

The Quartet Representative will report to and consult regularly with the Quartet and be guided by it as necessary.

The Quartet looks forward to welcoming Mr. Blair at its next meeting.



**US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, STATEMENT ANNOUNCING
A NEW INITIATIVE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, 16 JULY 2007**

[Inter alia, Bush called for a regional peace conference later this year with Arab and Israeli envoys.]

Good afternoon. In recent weeks, debate in our country has rightly focused on the situation in Iraq - yet Iraq is not the only pivotal matter in the Middle East. More than five years ago, I became the first American President to call for the creation of a Palestinian state. In the Rose Garden, I said that Palestinians should not have to live in poverty and occupation. I said that the Israelis should not have to live in terror and violence. And I laid out a new vision for the future - two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.

Since then, many changes have come - some hopeful, some dispiriting. Israel has taken difficult actions, including withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. Palestinians have held free elections, and chosen a president committed to peace. Arab states have put forward a plan that recognizes Israel's place in the Middle East. And all these parties, along with most of the international community, now share the goal of a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state - a level of consensus never before seen on this crucial issue.

The past five years have also brought developments far too familiar in the recent history of the region. Confronted with the prospect of peace, extremists have responded with acts of aggression and terror. In Gaza, Hamas radicals betrayed the Palestinian people with a lawless and violent takeover. By its actions, Hamas has demonstrated beyond all doubt that it is [more] devoted to extremism and murder than to serving the Palestinian people.

This is a moment of clarity for all Palestinians. And now comes a moment of choice. The alternatives before the Palestinian people are stark. There is the vision of Hamas, which the world saw in Gaza - with murderers in black masks, and summary executions, and men thrown to their death from rooftops. By following this path, the Palestinian people would guarantee chaos, and suffering, and the endless perpetuation of grievance. They would surrender their future to Hamas's foreign sponsors in Syria and Iran. And they would crush the possibility of any - of a Palestinian state.

There's another option, and that's a hopeful option. It is the vision of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad; it's the vision of their government; it's the vision of a peaceful state called Palestine as a

homeland for the Palestinian people. To realize this vision, these leaders are striving to build the institutions of a modern democracy. They're working to strengthen the Palestinian security services, so they can confront the terrorists and protect the innocent. They're acting to set up competent ministries that deliver services without corruption. They're taking steps to improve the economy and unleash the natural enterprise of the Palestinian people. And they're ensuring that Palestinian society operates under the rule of law. By following this path, Palestinians can reclaim their dignity and their future - and establish a state of their own.

Only the Palestinians can decide which of these courses to pursue. Yet all responsible nations have a duty to help clarify the way forward. By supporting the reforms of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad, we can help them show the world what a Palestinian state would look like - and act like. We can help them prove to the world, the region, and Israel that a Palestinian state would be a partner - not a danger. We can help them make clear to all Palestinians that rejecting violence is the surest path to security and a better life. And we can help them demonstrate to the extremists once and for all that terror will have no place in a Palestinian state.

So in consultation with our partners in the Quartet - the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations - the United States is taking a series of steps to strengthen the forces of moderation and peace among the Palestinian people.

First, we are strengthening our financial commitment. Immediately after President Abbas expelled Hamas from the Palestinian government, the United States lifted financial restrictions on the Palestinian Authority that we had imposed. This year, we will provide the Palestinians with more than \$190 million in American assistance - including funds for humanitarian relief in Gaza. To build on this support, I recently authorized the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to join in a program that will help generate \$228 million in lending to Palestinian businesses. Today, I announce our intention to make a direct contribution of \$80 million to help Palestinians reform their security services - a vital effort they're undertaking with the guidance of American General Keith Dayton. We will work with Congress and partners around the world to provide additional resources once a plan to build Palestinian institutions is in place. With all of this assistance, we are showing the Palestinian people that a commitment to peace leads to the generous support of the United States.

Second, we're strengthening our political and diplomatic commitment. Again today, President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert sat down together to discuss priorities and resolve issues. Secretary Rice and I have strongly supported these meetings, and she has worked with both parties to sketch out a "political horizon" for a Palestinian state. Now we will intensify these efforts, with the goal of increasing the confidence of all parties in a two-state solution. And we will continue to deliver a firm message to Hamas: You must stop Gaza from being a safe haven for attacks against Israel. You must accept the legitimate Palestinian government, permit humanitarian aid in Gaza, and dismantle militias. And you must reject violence, and recognize Israel's right to exist, and commit to all previous agreements between the parties. As I said in the Rose Garden five years ago, a Palestinian state will never be created by terror.

Third, we're strengthening our commitment to helping build the institutions of a Palestinian state. Last month, former Prime Minister - British Prime Minister Tony Blair agreed to take on a new role as Quartet representative. In this post, he will coordinate international efforts to help the Palestinians establish the institutions of a strong and lasting free society - including effective governing structures, a sound financial system, and the rule of law. He will encourage young Palestinians to participate in the political process. And America will strongly support his work to help Palestinian leaders answer their people's desire to live in peace.

All the steps I've outlined are designed to lay the foundation for a successful Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza - a nation with functioning political institutions and capable security forces, and leaders who reject terror and violence. With the proper foundation, we can soon begin serious negotiations toward the creation of a Palestinian state.

These negotiations must resolve difficult questions and uphold clear principles. They must ensure that Israel is secure. They must guarantee that a Palestinian state is viable and contiguous. And they must lead to a territorial settlement, with mutually agreed borders reflecting previous lines and current realities, and mutually agreed adjustments. America is prepared to lead discussions to address these issues, but they must be resolved by Palestinians and Israelis, themselves. Resolving these issues would help show Palestinians a clear way forward. And ultimately, it could lead to a final peace in the Middle East - a permanent end to the conflict, and an agreement on all the issues, including refugees and Jerusalem.

To make this prospect a reality, the Palestinian people must decide that they want a future of decency and hope - not a future of terror and death. They must match their words denouncing terror with action to combat terror. The Palestinian government must arrest terrorists, dismantle their infrastructure, and confiscate illegal weapons - as the road map requires. They must work to stop attacks on Israel, and to free the Israeli soldier held hostage by extremists. And they must enforce the law without corruption, so they can earn the trust of their people, and of the world. Taking these steps will enable the Palestinians to have a state of their own. And there's only way to end the conflict, and nothing less is acceptable.

Israel has a clear path. Prime Minister Olmert must continue to release Palestinian tax revenues to the government of Prime Minister Fayyad. Prime Minister Olmert has also made clear that Israel's future lies in developing areas like the Negev and Galilee - not in continuing occupation of the West Bank. This is a reality that Prime Minister Sharon recognized, as well. So unauthorized outposts should be removed and settlement expansion ended. At the same time, Israelis should find other practical ways to reduce their footprint without reducing their security - so they can help President Abbas improve economic and humanitarian conditions. They should be confident that the United States will never abandon its commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish state and homeland for the Jewish people.

The international community must rise to the moment, and provide decisive support to responsible Palestinian leaders working for peace. One forum to deliver that support is the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee - a group chaired by Norway that includes the United States and Japan, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan. Today I call for a session of this committee to gather soon, so that the world can back its words in real support for the new Palestinian government.

The world can do more to build the conditions for peace. So I will call together an international meeting this fall of representatives from nations that support a two-state solution, reject violence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and commit to all previous agreements between the parties. The key participants in this meeting will be the Israelis, the Palestinians, and their neighbors in the region. Secretary Rice will chair the meeting. She and her counterparts will review the progress that has been made toward building Palestinian institutions. They will look for innovative and effective ways to support further reform. And they will provide diplomatic support for the parties in their bilateral discussions and negotiations, so that we can move forward on a successful path to a Palestinian state.

Arab states have a pivotal role to play, as well. They should show strong support for President Abbas's government and reject the violent extremism of Hamas. They should use their resources to provide much-needed assistance to the Palestinian people. Nations like Jordan and Egypt, which are natural gateways for Palestinian exports, should open up trade to create opportunities on both sides of the border.

Arab nations should also take an active part in promoting peace negotiations. Re-launching the Arab League initiative was a welcome first step. Now Arab nations should build on this initiative - by ending the fiction that Israel does not exist, stopping the incitement of hatred in their official media, and sending cabinet-level visitors to Israel. With all these steps, today's Arab leaders can show themselves to be the equals of peacemakers like Anwar Sadat and King Hussein of Jordan.

The conflict in Gaza and the West Bank today is a struggle between extremists and moderates. And these are not the only places where the forces of radicalism and violence threaten freedom and peace. The struggle between extremists and moderates is also playing out in Lebanon - where Hezbollah and

Syria and Iran are trying to destabilize the popularly elected government. The struggle is playing out in Afghanistan - where the Taliban and al Qaeda are trying to roll back democratic gains. And the struggle is playing out in Iraq - where al Qaeda, insurgents, and militia are trying to defy the will of nearly 12 million Iraqis who voted for a free future.

Ceding any of these struggles to extremists would have deadly consequences for the region and the world. So in Gaza and the West Bank and beyond, the international community must stand with the brave men and women who are working for peace.

Recent days have brought a chapter of upheaval and uncertainty in the Middle East. But the story does not have to end that way. After the wave of killing by Hamas last month, a 16-year-old girl in Gaza City told a reporter, "The gunmen want to destroy the culture of our fathers and grandfathers. We will not allow them to do it." She went on, "I'm saying it's enough killing. Enough."

That young woman speaks for millions - in Gaza, the West Bank, in Israel, in Arab nations, and in every nation. And now the world must answer her call. We must show that in the face of extremism and violence, we stand on the side of tolerance and decency. In the face of chaos and murder, we stand on the side of law and justice. And in the face of terror and cynicism and anger, we stand on the side of peace in the Holy Land. Thank you.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH BEFORE THE
PALESTINIAN CENTRAL COUNCIL, RAMALLAH, 18 JULY 2007**

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate,

Today marks the passing of more than one month since the absurd and detestable coup operation that Hamas Movement executed against the Palestinian legitimacy; more than one month after the major crime against the homeland and the people executed by Hamas Movement and its gangs and militias against the Palestinian people.

More than one month and still they continue as we speak today committing crimes and acts of killing against the Palestinian people, against whom they call their brothers, but they are not their brothers because they have not such acts against the occupation, but acted in this manner against members of their same religion and kind, and they continue with these crimes without blinking; more than that, they fabricate every day and hour and minute lies and misleading stories and they use all means to justify their acts and evade their doings and they try to invent things that even the devil couldn't think of in terms of lies and distortion of facts; all this just to say that they were not wrong and that they didn't commit any wrong acts but from time to time they say: We were forced to do that!! How can we imagine that they were forced to commit such crimes? Last week, they distributed an internal report of 22 pages and they try to teach their members and they are already educated on all kinds of lies and fabrications and claims to cover up on their crimes; this report which was published in the newspaper and you are all witnesses on what happened and what is happening and you can see how they lied and they covered their crimes under the pretext of religion and I say here that religion is innocent from such people. This is not Islam; this is not the conduct of Muslims; this is not the conduct of our grandfathers; they justify lies and fabrications and all this in order to achieve their low unethical goals.

You know my dear brothers that we exerted all efforts and we acted within the maximum extent of our capabilities in accordance with our conscience in order to avoid the Palestinian bloodshed and in order to prevent a civil war. I have been using all means in the past four years and everyone blamed me for my patience and tolerance, but I always wanted us not to engage in a civil war and I traveled to all Arab capitals to have dialogue, but unfortunately we reached the current situation and at the end we went to Mecca and the Holy Qa'ba to swear our oath there in front of the Qa'ba and its walls and while they were swearing their oaths in Mecca, they were violating their same oaths in Gaza and they were digging tun-

nels under the roads and under my house to cause the bombing and to prepare for the moments that they were planning; despite this, they deny and say that the explosives were set against Israel and that the CD is fake and forged; they want to hide their crimes in this way but lies have a short life cycle.

I said last time that one of their leaders and I confirm that it was leadership who sent me the CD and he told me that he fears God and I say here now that I received the CD from two different sources from Hamas twice from two different people and both said the same and they said: "don't come to Gaza because the road is booby-trapped, and when I returned, I sent the CD to the so called Khaled Masha'al who said that I didn't call him and there is a guy who is still alive Samir Abu Eiseh and in the presence of Azzam al-Ahmad and he sent it to him and then Masha'al said: I have no idea about this; no one told me that there is a CD or information about a bombing operation against Abu Mazen.

I can't know of any place, religion or nation where lies and distortions are accepted; how did they learn all these lies and how can they justify the lies? I don't know. But I say that this is not part of Islam.

They tried to deny that they started this, and then they said they were forced to do that. Then, they know and all methods and facts show that they violated Mecca Agreement, and they wanted to achieve their goals and they attained their goals and they have dug in their tombs with their own hands. Today, we call on the Palestinian Central Council for another session which is a continuation of the previous session and we call on the Council to have its say and to take its decision because it is the reference for the PNA and there are some who say that it is the alternative. No, the PCC is the reference and the sole decision maker and the sole party that has legitimacy on all matters pertaining to our Palestinian affairs as long as the Palestinian National Council cannot convene.

What was said by the Speaker of the PNC Salim Za'noun on the matter of the Palestinian Constitution that has been ratified in the first reading in 2003 must be activated and it must be ratified so that we can be ready to receive the state if it comes and it will come and it must come. I will ask the Palestinian Central Council to call for a new term of the PNC and this requires preparation and setting up a date and all this can be left to either the PLO Executive Committee or to a PCC committee to be added to the PLO Executive Committee to discuss all matters and to study the matter and to decide the right time after it makes all necessary arrangements for the convening of the PNC so that we can activate the PLO.

Someone might come and say that there is the Cairo Agreement and I tell him that Hamas acts destroyed the Cairo Agreement and they committed this crime to wipe out Cairo Agreement and the dialogue now is between the factions under the PLO umbrella and the Palestinian Central Council and the Palestinian National Council are the concrete translation of this; therefore, we will not pay attention to them and we will not wait for instructions from Khaled Masha'al to agree or to refuse. No. Cairo Agreement is finished. And we are not ready to keep running after this kind of people.

From here, we also call on the Palestinian Central Council to issue decrees on early legislative and presidential elections and everyone here is in agreement on having elections based on the list and proportional representation. Therefore, we will call for this too and we will not wait for long to see those who are staying there to accept so that we can activate the PLO or activate our authority; they are not interested in anything other than their goals and illusions in their minds and they want to live in these goals and illusions forever.

Since the coup against the PNA, we have had a major task which is our people in Gaza, we know that they have been abducted like a hijacked plane, but we want to protect our people there and we don't want them to suffer or to be punished; Hamas and these people must be punished.

We decided and this is the work of the government to continue with all means to provide them with the water, electricity and all humanitarian items to our people so that they don't suffer from a crime that has nothing to do with them and for a mistake they didn't commit and we are determined to do this.

Today, I heard from the Minister of Information that Hamas controlled the Electricity Company in Gaza so that funds can be paid to them and this places us in an extremely difficult situation because these funds

come from the Europeans and are paid to the Israelis, but Hamas takes the revenues and spends them on its people; this is a matter that we have to study carefully and tackle and this is a difficult problem that we have to face, and we should not say that Hamas has to back off because Hamas will not back off.

There are other humanitarian issues, mainly the closure of Rafah Crossing where thousands of our people are waiting for the opening of the crossing and if we recall the past we can remember that when Israel decided on its unilateral withdrawal, we agreed with the Europeans and through the Americans and through them with the Israelis and the Egyptian brothers were a party too and the result was that the Europeans wont accept to be present at a crossing under the control of the Interior Minister headed by the so called Said Siam, and I said then that for the sake of our people, we are ready to send the presidential guard forces to the crossing on condition that the government agrees. At that time, the government agreed, and on the next day, the so called Hanieh came out and said: Abu Mazen took away my authorities. They agreed and we assumed the responsibility and we went to the crossing, and every day they used to invent a method to strike the crossing, including the fake battle that Hanieh invented. The Palestinian and for the first time in our history handed his passport to a Palestinian officer and was able to travel to Egypt in ten minutes. Now, Hamas desired to end the authority and the national security forces and the presidential guard forces and the crossing was closed. Who will open it? And they claim that Abu Mazen closed it.

I didn't close the crossing. The Europeans withdrew and Egypt is on the other side and there is no one on the other side and we started to think about means to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people through finding another way to let the people enter and leave.

You remember that at a certain period and during the Hajj occasion and the Israelis were moody in closing and opening the crossing and they closed the crossing during the Hajj and we said then that the pilgrims can enter through Bet Hanoun Crossing and Oja and Arish and the same thing can happen on their return, now whenever someone gets close to the crossing, Hamas fires rockets and then they say that Abu Mazen is closing the crossing; these people don't care for the people; they only care for their people and subordinates and they don't care about anything else.

With regards to those stranded at the Egyptian side of the crossing, the Prime Minister sent three ministers to Arish to see how they can help the people there and to provide them with assistance, but Hamas main concern is not to see anyone moving close to the crossing and they fire rockets. Now, al-Qassam Brigades are threatening the Egyptian side on the need to open the crossing within 24 hours and Hamas calls for demonstration at the crossing at noon; this is anarchy committed and concerted by chaotic people and thugs.

In the past period, I took a series of constitutional measures and I challenge anyone to say that any of the measures was unconstitutional. The government is finished and we discharged the government and by the way, five of their ministers resigned and others resigned and the Basic Law says that if 8 ministers resign the government falls, and we took a decision to discharge the government and this is a legitimate decisions and we announced the state of emergency, and the government was established to run the affairs during the state of emergency, and when we called for the PLC to convene, they prevented people by force from attending the session and we asked them to hold the session because we are not against legitimacy; practically, they made themselves lose their legitimacy; according to the law, we cannot say that this council is illegitimate.

The measures taken so far are all in line with the Basic Law: the discharge of Ismail Hanieh on June 14, the declaration of the state of emergency on June 14, the formation of the government to run the affairs during the state of emergency, the resignation of the emergency government on July 13, the commissioning of Salam Fayyad to form a government and the request made by the PM elect to call for a PLC session.

We act with respect and we respect ourselves and we respect our law and constitution. Therefore, we cannot say that the PLC is illegitimate. Ahmad Bahar answered although the speech was not directed

to him because his term is over and the previous session of the PLC that people were prevented to attend was to elect a new Speaker Office according to the Basic Law, but they interpret things they way they like and I don't know how they bring their legal experts and legal interpretations.

The term of the PLC within a few days comes to respond to the request of the PM and our process will continue and our work and government will continue and we cannot let down our people or let them live in an authority, legal or constitutional void.

We have said and we repeat that there won't be dialogue with those who executed the coup. Many delegations came to us and the last delegation was the Arab Parliament delegation and we explained to them the conditions and the documents and brother Azzam Al-Ahmad sat with them for 4 hours and after that they didn't return. Many people come, and we say: when they end the coup and all its despicable results and when they respect the laws and decrees and regulations that were issued and when they accept the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of our people as it is in all its decisions and commitments and laws and when they accept the one authority and one law and one legitimate weapons, then we will see. There is state in the world that has a legitimate weapon and an illegitimate weapon. I said in the past that we want elections that don't exclude anyone because the right to vote is a right granted to every citizen regardless of his affiliation, ideology and thoughts. And since then I have been defending this and everyone blamed for but I am convinced in every step until matters reached the unbearable and they rebelled against their vows and they deviated from the path and they conspired and planned things secretly to end the PNA. Now, there won't be dialogue with them until they retreat from what they committed and to respect the matters I mentioned and then we will see.

In the recent meetings that were conducted with the Israeli side or during the phone call with US President Bush and the meeting with Javier Solana, the High Representative of the EU Foreign and Security Policy, we summarized matters in the following points:

First, we demand the start of the final status negotiations; we don't want matters to continue talking about the crossings and funds and important violations only, there is a need to have dialogue over the final solution and everyone knows what is the final solution: it is an independent contiguous viable state within the 1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital and a just agreed upon solution to the refugees problem; this is what we said in Camp Davis and many said then: the traitors went to Camp David to sell the cause", then they discovered that those traitors are patriotic far more than other people. This has been our position in 2000 and this is our position in 2007.

We are discussing within this framework that in case the door for negotiations opens and it might be opened in the so called international conference or meeting. We have to wait and see until fall as many of the matters will be discussed so that we can go enlightened and so that the results can be positive.

The government now exercises its activities and all economic and internal security activities and the negotiations will be the jurisdiction of the PLO and the Presidency which will discuss these issues with international and local parties.

We have a promise on US assistance and I like to say that Europe offers assistance. Now we have been promised according to the speech of US President Bush an amount of 190 million US dollars for economic issues and we are waiting and if we get the funds, we welcome them and then we can start getting out of the crises, we will continue to pay full salaries God willing, this is what the Prime Minister promised me.

On Friday, 256 prisoners from our people and brothers from the various cities will be released, mainly our colleague brother Abdul Rahim Mallouh and the fact of the matter is that we have not studied or discussed the issue of the prisoners with the Israelis; I only know about Mallouh because the Israelis mentioned his name to me.

But we demanded the activation and implementation of the first Sharm El-Sheikh Agreement on forming a committee to agree on the criteria of those to be released through agreed upon criteria but so far we have not agreed on this.

On the issue of those deported from the Nativity Church, their issue is on the way to be solved. On the issue of the wanted men, all those whom the occupation agreed to stop tracking down will be within the framework of the PNA and they will be committed to the legitimacy and we appreciate their struggle and hard work and suffering and we tell them: now you have to take a rest; you are in our hearts and eyes and you will get all what you need; you are our sons and people.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, LISBON, PORTUGAL, 19 JULY 2007

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, Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in Portugal to discuss the situation in the Middle East. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to bring about an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to work to lay the foundation for the establishment of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security, as a step towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, consistent with the Road Map and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Quartet welcomed President [George W.] Bush's 16 July statement renewing United States commitment to a negotiated two-State solution, and supported President Bush's call for an international meeting in the fall. The Quartet looks forward to consultations as the meeting is prepared. The Quartet agreed that such a meeting should provide diplomatic support for the parties in their bilateral discussions and negotiations in order to move forward on a successful path to a Palestinian State.

The Quartet welcomed the agreement by Tony Blair to be the Quartet Representative and discussed with him the urgent work that lies ahead. Noting the centrality of reform, economic development and institutional capacity-building to the establishment of a stable and prosperous Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza that will unite all Palestinians and live in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, the Quartet urged the parties and all States in the region to work closely with Mr. Blair, and encouraged robust international support for his efforts, including the convening of an ad hoc liaison committee meeting in the fall.

The Quartet expressed support for the Palestinian Authority Government headed by Salam Fayyad, which is committed to the political platform of President [Mahmoud] Abbas that reflects the 30 January 2006 Quartet principles. The Quartet encouraged direct and rapid financial assistance and other aid to the Palestinian Authority Government to help reform, preserve and strengthen vital Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, and to support the rule of law.

The Quartet welcomed the resumption of bilateral talks between Prime Minister [Ehud] Olmert and President Abbas, and expressed support for steps taken by the Israeli Government, including the resumption of tax and customs revenue transfers and the decision to release Palestinian prisoners. The Quartet encouraged continued bilateral dialogue and further cooperation, including on the political horizon, as the necessary framework to move forward. It urged both parties to work without delay to fulfil their previous commitments and to build confidence.

Recognizing the continuing importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet looked forward to the planned visit to Israel by representatives of the Arab League to discuss the Initiative. The Quartet expressed support for continued and expanded dialogue between Israel and the Arab States. It looked forward to an early meeting with the Arab States to follow up on their May meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh.

The Quartet emphasized the need to find ways to sustain Palestinian economic activity and the importance of creating circumstances that would allow for full implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access, particularly in view of the impact of crossings on the Palestinian economy and daily life. The Quartet encouraged both parties to address their Road Map obligations, including an end to settlement expansion and the removal of unauthorized outposts, and an end to violence and terror. The Quartet expressed its deep concern over the humanitarian conditions in Gaza, and agreed on the importance of continued emergency and humanitarian assistance.

The Quartet agreed to continue to consult regularly on developments, and to meet again in September to take stock of developments, hear from Mr. Blair on his strategy for the economic and institutional agenda, and discuss the way ahead.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2817TH EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING,
BRUSSELS, 23 JULY 2007**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. Reiterating its conclusions of 18 June, the Council stresses the urgency of taking forward a credible peace process which will give the Palestinian people the perspective of an independent, democratic and viable state living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security, and bring peace and stability to the Middle East. The Council calls on the parties to desist from any action that threatens the viability of this solution.
2. In this context, settlement activities in and around East Jerusalem as well as in the rest of the West Bank and the ongoing construction of the barrier on Palestinian land which are against international law are of particular concern. The EU will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by the parties. Stopping all violence among the parties is of the utmost importance for the peace process to succeed. The EU strongly condemns the firing of Qassam rockets into Israeli territory. While recognizing Israel's legitimate right to self defence, the EU calls on Israel to exercise utmost restraint and underlines that action should not be disproportionate or in contradiction to international humanitarian law. While welcoming the release of the BBC journalist Alan Johnston, the EU reiterates its call for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli soldier, and commends efforts, including by partners in the region to that effect. It equally calls for the immediate release of Palestinian legislators detained by Israel.
3. The Council strongly encourages the parties to continue their bilateral dialogue, which should both achieve concrete results and lead to meaningful political negotiations to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement. The Council welcomes the meeting between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas on 16 July and reiterates its hope that these meetings will soon lead, in the framework of a renewed political process, to meaningful negotiations on the final status. The Council emphasizes again the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative as a major element in moving the Middle East Peace Process forward. It expresses its hope that the ongoing dialogue between the Arab League and Israel will support a renewed political process aimed at advancing regional peace. In accordance with the Roadmap, the Quartet, in consultation with the parties, should in due course convene an international conference to achieve these goals. In this context, the EU welcomes the speech of President Bush of 16 July and is determined to work with the US, other Quartet partners as well as partners in the region, in an effort to bring about an early end to the Israeli-Arab conflict. It expects the Quartet to participate in the international meeting proposed by President Bush and stands ready to play an active role.
4. The EU welcomes the meeting of Quartet Principals in Lisbon. In this context the EU emphasizes its determination to play an active role with a view to urgently put in place a political and diplomatic process offering a political perspective in the quest for a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict, in conformity with the relevant UNSC resolutions and on the basis of the Roadmap, notably its goals and principles. It looks forward to a meeting in the region with the Israelis and the Palestini-

- ans and representatives of the Arab League. The EU will continue to play an active role in the Quartet whose commitment is underlined by the appointment of Tony Blair as Quartet Representative. The Council warmly welcomes the appointment and looks forward to working with him.
5. The Council welcomes, as a first step, the partial transfer by Israel of withheld Palestinian tax and custom revenues but it reiterates its call for the immediate, complete and regular release of the remaining and future funds. The Council welcomes the initial release of 255 prisoners and detainees as part of the commitment by Israel following the recent meetings between President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert in Sharm el- Sheik and Jerusalem.
The Council urges further steps to meet the commitments made at these meetings, including a removal of checkpoints and barriers in the West Bank. Such moves will support progress on the political track.
 6. The Council reiterates its full support for President Abbas and the government under Prime Minister Fayyad. The Council reaffirms its position on events in Gaza. Reconciliation and national unity behind the programme of peace articulated by President Abbas are the only way to achieve Palestinian national goals by peaceful, lawful and democratic means. The EU opposes any division of the Palestinian territories and confirms its readiness to engage with all Palestinian parties whose policy and actions reflect the Quartet principles.
 7. The EU has resumed relations with institutions of the Palestinian Authority. The EU has started to provide direct financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian government. The Council confirms its commitment to help build the institutions and economy of the future Palestinian state and stresses the need to fully develop the economy in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the promotion of cooperation with the Palestinian private sector. The Council has confirmed its support to the Palestinian Civil Police through reengagement of the EUPOL COPPS. The Council calls on Israel to provide the necessary conditions to this end.
 8. Gravelly concerned by the critical humanitarian situation, the EU will continue doing its utmost to ensure the provision of emergency and humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza, whom it will not abandon. The Council calls on all parties to work towards an opening of the crossings in and out of Gaza for both humanitarian and commercial flows. Karni and other crossings must be open on a regular and predictable basis, in view of reaching the transit volumes foreseen in the Agreement on Movement and Access. This is necessary to ensure the viability of the Palestinian economy and to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people, both in Gaza and in the West Bank. It also underlines the need to re-open the Rafah crossing point and stands ready to resume the full activities of the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Rafah as soon as conditions allow.



**PERMANENT OBSERVER OF PALESTINE TO THE UN, RIYAD MANSOUR,
IDENTICAL LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL
AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNSC, 26 JULY 2007**

General Assembly, 10th emergency special session, Agenda item 5 (Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory),
Security Council, 62nd year

I write to you at the end of another violent day in the Occupied Palestinian Territory due to the continuation by Israel, the occupying Power, of its illegal policies and practices against the Palestinian people and its determination to continue on the path of violence rather than peace. While the Palestinian leadership is taking every step possible to promote stability and enhance the chances for peace, the occupying Power continues taking actions that undermine these steps and threaten the prospects for peace and stability.

The Israeli occupying forces continue carrying out military incursions and raids throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The ongoing raids have included daily arrest campaigns in which dozens of Palestinians have been arbitrarily detained in addition to the thousands of Palestinians already being detained and imprisoned by the occupying Power. Moreover, these in-

cursions are typically violent operations endangering the safety and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population in those areas and involve the harassment, humiliation and physical ill-treatment of the civilians. One tragic example in this regard occurred in the village of Taqu' near Bethlehem, where Israeli soldiers beat 20-year-old Jihad Al-Sha'er to death. According to medical reports, the young man was bludgeoned to death and had not received any gunshot wounds, contrary to the story presented by the Israeli occupation forces. The brutal murder of this civilian is yet further indication of the total disregard for Palestinian life that the occupying Power has repeatedly displayed through its lax treatment of such blatant criminal acts by its forces. In addition, the occupying Power continues to carry out illegal extrajudicial killings of Palestinians, with at least three Palestinian men killed today by the occupying forces in a targeted missile airstrike at their car in Gaza City and another two men killed in military raids in the southern Gaza Strip.

At the same time, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to impose a suffocating siege and closure on the Gaza Strip, completely restricting the freedom of movement of the Palestinian civilian population and denying it access to the basic requirements for a dignified life and violating, collectively and individually, their most basic human rights. Despite allowing the entry into Gaza of daily subsistence needs of food, fuel and medicine, the occupying Power continues to deprive Gaza of other vital commodities, including building and other industrial goods. Seventy-five per cent of Gaza's factories have already shut down because of this Israeli siege and large-scale construction projects by United Nations agencies have been halted, denying thousands a chance of employment, even if only temporarily, and preventing the needed reconstruction and redevelopment of much of the damaged and destroyed civilian infrastructure. Further, I wish to recall the recent warning of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East that without an end to the Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation will continue to decline and the inhabitants of Gaza will shortly become completely dependent on outside aid for survival.

The continuation of all such illegal, inhumane and provocative actions by the occupying Power are totally contradictory to the Israeli Government's statements of commitment to the peace process and dialogue with the Palestinian leadership, which, despite the difficult situation on the ground, continues to exert efforts to calm the situation and pursue a just, peaceful settlement of the conflict with Israel. The repeated military assaults and the continuing siege on Gaza, in addition to Israel's non-stop unlawful colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, undermine every effort to move towards peace, for, contrary to its spoken words, these actions show the true intentions of the occupying Power to continue oppressing the Palestinian civilian population and continue its illegal occupation.

There is, despite the many difficulties of the current situation, an opportunity to move towards peace in the region, as evidenced by the various international, Arab and Palestinian efforts being exerted in this regard. Just yesterday, 25 July, a historic visit to Israel was undertaken by two Arab Foreign Ministers, representing the League of Arab States, to promote the Arab Peace Initiative. Moreover, United States President George W. Bush has called for an international conference in the coming months to bring the parties together in order to resume the peace process, based on the clear understanding that peace and security in the region can only be realized through an end to this foreign military occupation and the establishment of a viable, contiguous independent Palestinian state. These opportunities must be seized and built upon and the illegal actions of Israel, which move us all in the opposite direction, must be rejected, and Israel must be compelled to cease its violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, to abide by resolutions of international legitimacy and to seriously pursue peace in good faith.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 289 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 5 July 2007 (A/ES-10/393-S/2007/411), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

In follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my profound regret to inform you that, since my last letter to you two days ago, at least 13 more Palestinian civilians have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 4,624 people. (The names of the martyrs identified are listed in the annex to the present letter.)

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Riyadh Mansour
Ambassador / Permanent Observer

[Annex with the names of 13 martyrs killed by the Israeli forces between 8-26 July 2007 follows]



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, NEW YORK, 23 SEPTEMBER 2007

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

The Quartet principals - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey 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, Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in New York to discuss the situation in the Middle East. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

The Quartet recognized the present opportunity for progress and the robust regional and international desire for peace in the Middle East. The Quartet expressed its strong support for the ongoing bilateral talks between Prime Minister [Ehud] Olmert and President [Mahmoud] Abbas, and welcomed the formation of Israeli and Palestinian teams to discuss the core issues that are essential to progress towards their shared goal of a negotiated two-State solution and establishment of a viable Palestinian State living side by side with a secure Israel. The Quartet welcomed parallel steps taken by the parties to build confidence and improve conditions on the ground. The Quartet underscored the need for immediate additional steps to meet previous commitments, including those under the Road Map and the Agreement on Movement and Access, so as to create a positive atmosphere conducive to progress towards a two-State solution.

The Quartet expressed support for the international meeting on Israeli-Palestinian peace called for by President [George W.] Bush in his 16 July statement. Principals discussed the meeting and agreed that it should be substantive and serious, providing support to the parties in their bilateral discussions and negotiations in order to move forward urgently on a successful path to a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza that will unite all Palestinians. The goal of this meeting is to bring together key members of the international community in support of efforts between the Israelis and Palestinians to end their conflict and help bring a final peace in the Middle East. The Quartet expects the meeting to affirm its support for the two-State solution based on a rejection of violence and its support for progress by the parties in their bilateral discussions. The meeting should also review progress that has been made towards building Palestinian institutions and discuss innovative and effective ways to support further Palestinian reform. The Quartet will work for a successful international meeting and for the implementation of its conclusions.

Quartet Representative Tony Blair briefed the Quartet on his meetings and discussions in the region, and discussed the way forward on the development of a functioning Palestinian economy and the institutions of governance that will form the foundation of a Palestinian State.

The Quartet agreed that Mr. Blair should work closely with the Palestinian Authority Government in developing a multi-year agenda for institutional and economic development, and looked forward to

strong technical and financial support from the international community in support of these efforts, beginning with the 24 September Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting.

In that context, the Quartet called upon all countries that are able to contribute to urgently provide financial support to the Palestinian Authority. The Quartet endorsed an extension of the Temporary International Mechanism until 31 December 2007, and expressed its hope that, during this period, a mechanism would be established to facilitate the transition to direct international assistance to this Palestinian Authority Government.

The Quartet expressed concern over conditions in Gaza. It agreed on the importance of continued emergency and humanitarian assistance without obstruction. The Quartet called for the continued provision of essential services. It expressed its urgent concern over the continued closure of major crossing points given the impact on the Palestinian economy and daily life.

The Quartet further noted its grave concern over the continued rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, and recent efforts by Hamas to stifle freedom of speech and the press.

The Quartet discussed its forthcoming meeting with members of the Arab League follow-up committee to consult on next steps on the Arab Peace Initiative and regional support for bilateral talks between the parties.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).



**PRIME MINISTER SALAM FAYYAD, STATEMENT TO THE MEETING OF
THE AD HOC LIAISON COMMITTEE, NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to begin by thanking Jonas Gahr Store and the Government of Norway for convening this meeting and the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, for serving as our host. This meeting takes place at an important juncture in Palestinian history: with Palestinian relations with the international community now fully restored, I hope that our deliberations today will help provide a clearer political, economic and financial horizon for all parties involved.

Since the last AHLC meeting in London in December 2005, the Palestinian Authority has gone through one of the most difficult periods since its inception. Our economy has experienced a substantial drop in output and unemployment and poverty rates soared. This, coupled with the continued occupation and a highly volatile political environment, have been devastating to the Palestinian people.

The figures on unemployment, poverty, and arrears are staggering and, with each passing quarter, these figures seem to rise as though there is no limit to the depth of deterioration. For example, in 2006, despite more than a doubling of external budgetary assistance, our overdue financial obligations rose, with approximately \$1 billion owed to government employees, the pension fund and private sector suppliers. Moreover, today, almost two-thirds of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip live in poverty, with per capita income at just 60 percent of its level in 1999. Our institutions have not been immune from the devastation: the transparent and accountable public finance system designed to bring our financial management up to international standards became highly fragmented and much of the progress that had been earlier attained was quickly lost.

With these grim realities at hand, it is easy to believe that the task before us is insurmountable. Indeed, the economic outlook is highly dependent upon the political and security situation - a volatile variable - and, in particular, on the mobility of goods and people. But, I believe that the task is NOT insurmountable and the convening of this meeting here today in the framework of the AHLC is a good start.

But in order to ensure that the process works properly, and with a view to overcoming at least some of the weaknesses encountered previously, we should, beginning today, usher into an era of much-enhanced tripartite accountability, where each of the three parties to the AHLC process - the international community, Israel and the Palestinian Authority - begins to assume and fulfill clearly-defined obligations and responsibilities. The time to do this is now: we have a unique opportunity owing to the full restoration of normal relations between the PA and the international community, renewed discussions between the PA and Israel on the political process, and the upcoming international meeting. All of these are signs that we are moving on the right path towards freeing our people from the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state living side by side with the State of Israel.

With respect to enhanced tripartite accountability, I am not someone who likes to spend much time talking about the obligations and responsibilities of others. Surely, the international community knows what needs to be done, and from the many conversations I have had with her, Tzipi Livni and her colleagues in government know, quite well, what Israel has to do for there to be economic revival, economic development and indeed normal economic life in Palestine. Therefore, instead of talking about the obligations of others, I want to devote the balance of my remarks to explain what we Palestinians want to do to help ourselves.

In the context of enhanced tripartite accountability, we intend to approach our responsibilities within a framework based on one major theme: Make the PA responsive to the needs of the Palestinian people – in the West Bank and Gaza Strip - in a fully transparent and accountable manner.

As you will hear in our subsequent presentations today, we decided to approach this task in a comprehensive way. We have begun the process of putting together the Palestinian National Policy Agenda for 2008-2010 centered on a national consensus as to the vision for the state we want to have. In short, our Agenda sets out our vision, our goals and our plans for the future Palestinian state. The state we seek is a progressive, open, democratic state based on the rule of law, with respect for human rights, equal opportunity, cultural sensitivity and tolerance; a state that will make a qualitative addition to the region and a state where our security as well as that of our neighbors is assured. We seek strong institutions that can meet the needs of our people and a state that Palestinians can be proud of. To implement this overarching vision, we set goals for each sector - from judiciary to security; from health to education. All of our goals are underpinned by a multi-year budget framework for 2008-2010 in which we aim to attain fiscal sustainability.

We are fortunate to have the counsel, advice and support of Tony Blair, the Quartet's Special Envoy, with whom we have begun to work in earnest. We are looking forward to continuing to work with him in the coming months leading to the broad-based donor conference in December of this year, and beyond.

We have already begun the work. Upon taking office, we immediately began to put our finances in order. Within a few short months we managed to repair the damage to our public finance system, and with this repair the Palestinian Authority is now fully capable of receiving and effectively managing donor assistance extended to us directly. In the face of political risk, we took measures to effect civil service reform and improve fiscal sustainability through the elimination of tens of thousands of illegal contracts.

Soon we will be taking additional politically-difficult measures such as rationalizing utility subsidies. We believe that these two elements are of paramount importance to attaining fiscal sustainability. Although both are highly politically sensitive, and even though we are operating in a complex and challenging political environment, out of a sense of responsibility and dedication to honest government, we have decided to take these difficult measures. We hope that this will send a signal of our full determination to succeed in all areas of governance, and, in particular, security where we have made important progress towards the implementation of the presidential decree banning militias. We aim to demonstrate that we are capable of maintaining security over all of the territory under our control.

As we move forward to prepare for the donor event in December, we will continue to need the support of the international community to help us deal with the needs of here are now, including fulfilling

our duty to help out our people in Gaza. The Gaza Strip is an integral part of our homeland and will be an integral part of our future state. Indeed, the world cannot be indifferent to the plight, suffering and misery which our people there continue to endure. Additionally, we need to ensure, with your help, that our funding needs are fully covered in the run up to the period when support mechanisms agreed to in December become fully operational. Finally, donors may wish to consider setting up a multi-donor trust-fund that could be administered by the World Bank.

We have begun the process, and will continue to do more. At our next meeting in December, we will show up trusting that our partners in this tripartite framework will have fulfilled their responsibilities too. Thank you.



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS TO THE AD HOC LIAISON COMMITTEE
MEETING IN NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2007**

I would like to thank Norway for convening this unique meeting. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) is the only permanent international forum where Israel and Palestine, together with the international community, discuss questions pertaining to cooperation. It is the first time that AHLC it meets at this level since Oslo.

The Quartet meeting of yesterday was very good. Having attended all the Quartet meetings, I think there is a sense of movement shared by all the Quartet members, and I am also sure that this is the feeling of the members of the Arab League. The spirit has changed. We need to build on this momentum and bring concrete changes before the end of the year. We must take the word “failure” out of our vocabulary. We cannot afford to fail.

We welcome the efforts of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to reform the Palestinian institutions. I am sure that he will do a very good job in reviving the Palestinian economy. I also want to thank Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni for her speech. I will always remember that night when we had dinner in Sderot and Qassam rockets started to be fired. These kind of experiences make me continue to struggle for peace.

If it is handled properly, we now have a moment in which a political horizon can be opened. The Palestinian economy can be revitalised and changes can be made on the ground, all at the same time. Our aim is to create a Palestinian state and for this we need a viable economy. We need freedom of access and movement and, at the same time, we need security for Israel. This is difficult but not impossible to achieve.

With the calendar ahead of us – the November meeting, which has been prepared very constructively with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday, and the donors' conference in December – we have a real chance to make a dream reality.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH BEFORE THE UN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY, 62ND SESSION, NEW YORK, 28 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of this session. We are very hopeful that your work and efforts will be successful.

I would like also to convey through you our appreciation to H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa for the tremendous efforts she undertook during her presidency of the General Assembly in the previous session.

On this occasion I would like to express our full confidence in the role of the United Nations and all its specialized agencies, given its historic responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, as it, for many decades, has continued to reaffirm the national and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to guarantee all kinds of support for our people in the political, economic and humanitarian fields.

We must refer to the exceptional work that has been done and continues to be done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in order to preserve the future for generations of Palestine refugees and to ensure them basic services. We must also refer to the efforts exerted by other institutions whether they defend the basic human rights of the Palestinian citizens, or extend support to us in educational and cultural fields and in enhancing the role of the Palestinian National Authority since its inception and contributing to the building of our national institutions.

I would also like to thank H.E. the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for placing the question of Palestine at the head of his work priorities and for the high attention he has given to seeking a solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and creatively contributing with us to securing the means that would lead to the re-launching of the peace process.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Confrontations, wars and conflicts in our region and their dangerous and tragic repercussions on the peoples of the regions have become the primary threat to world peace. I call upon the conscience of the entire humanity and the international community to act urgently to radically address these situations without delay. Our experiences over the past years and decades have proven that the policy of delaying the settlement of the major conflicts in our region or partially addressing them just to contain them or to reduce the dangers of these conflicts or to manage them have only led to further complication of the situations and the threat of civil and regional wars and helping terrorism to grow in an environment conducive to it and to spread to regrettably become a global phenomenon.

However, this grim picture should not conceal from our eyes the reality that hope is still alive and that the will of the overwhelming majority of our peoples, supported by the international community, are capable of overcoming the tragic destiny which the forces of occupation, extremism and aggression and war and terrorism in our region want to force us into.

Indeed, there are vital and responsible forces in the Middle East which represent the conscience of their peoples and have a deep desire to move towards liberation, progress and democracy. Though these forces work and struggle in extreme difficulties, they are committed and have the strong will to overcome the current situations and to create a new future for the Middle East in which all of its peoples will enjoy freedom and equality.

There could be no doubt that defending Islam, this religion of moderation, love and human brotherhood, is the responsibility of these vital forces in our region to counter the attempts to defame this monotheistic religion or to portray it in an unfair and distorted manner contrary to its spirit and tenets. Islam is a religion of tolerance against terrorism, killing and assassination. It is a religion of enlightenment against ignorance, darkness and backwardness. It is the religion of openness to the world against closeness and extremism. We all must work together to preserve the mutual human values which we all realize are subject today to violation, aggression and defamation. We must seek broaden human understanding between different religions, cultures and civilizations, because the attempt to spread the spirit of animosity between them is one of the most dangerous means used by international terrorism in the present time. That is why the dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations is necessary today, particularly since all wars, especially the world wars, were not wars between religions and cultures but rather wars of interests.

That reality constitutes only one fragment of the overall picture. Missing opportunities one after another to seriously address the issues of the peoples in the region and to reach fundamental and comprehensive solutions to them, with the question of Palestine at the forefront, will push our peoples

towards the precipice of despair and frustration and make them easy prey to the forces of ignorance and extremism.

Is it not time for the international community to seize this opportunity which we have today to move towards re-launching the peace process? And to transform the idea of the international meeting, which has gained, not only the overwhelming support of the Palestinian and Israeli societies but also of the world at large, into a new beginning for negotiations that would lead to an end to the Israeli occupation of our Palestinian territory and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 and to the achievement of the vision of two States?

Is it not time to establish the independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital and to find a just and agreed upon solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 in order to put an end to their anguish and suffering that had lasted for six decades?

Is it not time to put an end to the policies of colonial expansionism, the seizure of Palestinian lands under different pretexts, the building of the racist separation wall, the imposition of siege, the erection of checkpoints around cities, villages and refugee camps, the continued policies of collective punishment, and the imprisonment of more than 11,300 Palestinians in Israeli jails, some of them imprisoned for more than quarter of a century?

Is it not time for the city of Jerusalem to become a city of true peace for all peoples of faith from all religions, and for Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all actions aimed at altering the character of the sacred city, imposing siege on it and forcing its inhabitants to leave, and desecrating the Christian and Islamic holy places in the city?

Is it not time for Israel to cease its acts of killing, assassinations, dispersion and the destruction of homes and confiscation of lands and homes which are occurring daily?

Is it not time for our people to enjoy freedom and independence in equality with all other peoples and to build their peaceful future side by side with their neighbors, including Israel?

I hope I will not return to this podium next year asking the same questions as there is no obstacle to provide all means of success for the forthcoming peace meeting, particularly since the brotherly Arab countries have shown their true readiness, through the Arab Peace Initiative, to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, which will be beneficial and fruitful to all parties in the region through the development of normal and comprehensive relations when the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory and the other occupied Arab territories has ended and the sovereign and independent Palestine State is established based on the 1967 borders.

It is in this spirit that we look forward to the substance of the proposed meeting and to an invitation for all concerned parties to attend.

Let me frankly state that there is no politician or responsible leader concerned with his people's interests who does not know well the solution between us and our Israeli neighbors that can be achieved and can last. This solution is embodied in the many resolutions adopted throughout the successive sessions of the General Assembly, the initiative of President Bush for the two-State solution - Palestine side by side with Israel, the Road Map which was endorsed in Security Council resolution 1515, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the outcome of negotiations and plans presented by many parties from 2000 and until now.

Hence, from this podium, I address the Israeli Government, with whose Prime Minister Mr. Olmert I had important and in-depth discussion and dialogue, so that we may end the spiraling of lost opportunities and to make the opportunity of the international conference real and substantive. We should go together to this conference holding in our hands clear, detailed and realistic bases to solve all the final status issues, especially Jerusalem, borders, refugees, water and security and other key issues.

From this podium, I wish to reiterate our people's full readiness to be involved in a true peace process that would lead to a comprehensive and complete agreement on all final status issues. We will present this agreement, as we promised, for a popular referendum to all of the Palestinian people - all segments and wherever they may be - so they can give their views and decision on what has been reached. Thus we can fully and strategically preserve the peace.

I would also like to affirm that we will continue to address, in accordance with our basic law and other laws, the coup d'état that took place in the Gaza Strip, in order to preserve democracy in our country from the ventures of any group which wants to impose by force its control or its own dark ideas and through armed rebellion. Anyone who thinks that our people, who presented throughout decades the martyrs, the wounded and the prisoners for the sake of freedom and independence and the building of a free, progressive and democratic state, would follow those who want to impose by armed force upon them a closed and backward regime and society, is extremely wrong.

Some have attempted in the past to transform the question of Palestine into a card to be used to serve regional interests or to realize expansionist goals or to promote specific ideas and ideologies, disregarding the true interests of the Palestinian people.

But, we are the ones who struggled and devoted all of our lives for the independence of our national decision, for the protection of the interests and rights of our people, and the rejection of occupation and control from any side. We will not allow for the tragedy to happen one more time or for any attempt to manipulate our national destiny to achieve its goals.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I came to this podium to convey the message of a tired people burdened with the wounds of occupation, dispersion, imprisonment and martyrdom. Yet they are also a people imbued with the spirit of human dignity and the faith that their future will be made by their own hands even though their past was determined by those who conspired against them and their rights.

I came to reiterate the words of our eternal leader Yasser Arafat, confident that the olive branch - the branch of peace - which does not fade or die, will not fall from my hand.

I came to convey the pain and suffering of every Palestinian man and woman, every one that lost a martyr or injured, everyone that awaits the freedom of a brother, father, sister or mother in prisons, and those stranded on the Iraqi-Syrian borders and the millions of Palestinians living in their homeland or in refugee camps, affirming that the message of peace delivered by the prophets and bearers of the Divine messages from our land will grow and flourish and that the voice of peace in our country will be louder than any other voice.

For all this, let us move forward hand in hand on the shining path of peace, without narrow agendas or temporary, short-term interests. In conclusion, allow me to address our Palestinian people in the homeland and in the Diaspora to tell them that there is an important opportunity on the horizon. Let us together unit to make this a reality so that our people can regain their national, legitimate rights and achieve the peace, prosperity and stability for which we have so long aspired and which our steadfast and patient people so deserve.

We also must work so that peace will come to the peoples who suffer and bleed daily like the brotherly Iraqi people and to the peoples who deserve a secure and stable life within the framework of democracy such as the dear people of Lebanon.

Let us build a stable and cooperative world based on respect for life and the right of peoples to self-determination. I thank you, Mr. President, and I thank all of members of this international organization for their support and positions.



JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, ADDRESS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BRUSSELS, 3 OCTOBER 2007 [EXCERPTS]

[...] MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS (MEPP)

Let me start with this, because I think one of the most burning issues, if I may say so, for the EP, is the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). I will describe to you my experience in the week-and-a-half that I was in New York, at the UN, at the meetings that took place in the context of the Quartet and also the meetings between the Quartet and the Arab League representatives on Sunday. My analysis is that these have been the best couple of meetings that have taken place vis-à-vis the MEPP, at least concerning the Israeli-Palestinian track.

We had a very good meeting of the Quartet at which we agreed on the most important events that are to take place from the month of September to the month of December. The Quartet meeting took place on Sunday and the ministerial Ad-hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) meeting was held on Monday. This is a committee that was born in Oslo and this was the first time ever that it met at the level of ministers. So, it was an important meeting, chaired by the Norwegians, the EU and the Secretary General of the UN.

We will have also, in the second half of November, an international conference, and that will be followed in December with a pledging conference to help the Palestinians. Let me tell you that, as far as the whole process is concerned, I have been more - I don't know whether to use the term optimistic, but - much more positively inclined towards the possibilities that we have in front of us, the possibility of creating a new dynamic from here until December with all these sets of meetings. It is true that meetings do not mean solutions but I have the impression, after the meeting that took place among the Quartet members and the meeting with the Arab League countries that evening, that a new dynamic may be created.

As you know, in the last period of time, six meetings have taken place between President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert. The sixth one is taking place now, it had not finished when we started this meeting. The five that have taken place were meetings in a format of two parts. One part with the two delegations, one from Israel, the other from the Palestinians, and the second part tête-à-tête between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas. Those meetings were in the late part of August and the early part of September and I followed them very closely. In those meetings all the fundamental issues that will have to be discussed in the endgame were discussed bilaterally by the President and the Prime Minister. That means the question of borders, the question of refugees and the question related to Jerusalem. At least those issues which are fundamental.

In the fifth meeting, which took place a couple of weeks ago, the decision was taken to delegate, by both sides, into committees that will begin to write down what took place at the five meetings between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas. The meeting that is taking place today will be the starting point of writing a document that we expect will be agreed by the two sides and that will be the fundamental ingredient of the conference that will take place in the second part of November.

If everything goes in the right direction, and I hope it will, this conference will have the possibility of beginning to define initial positions for the final negotiations on the issues I just mentioned, for which there has been difficulty in finding an agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

After Camp David, as you know, there was a meeting in Sharm el Sheik, in which I participated, representing the EU already. That meeting led to the Mitchel report and from that meeting the possibility of continuing negotiations in Ottawa also arose. Since then - 2000 to 2001 - I have not seen a possibility of moving the process forward until the sentiment I had the Sunday before last. With that I don't mean that it is going to materialise, but I want to convey to you the sentiment that the current dynamic produced something to my mind that will be doable, in the way of moving into a final agreement. Doable does not mean that it will be done. We have had many experiences in which things appeared doable but in the end were not done. I think that, once again, we have the possibility though I don't

know if it will be done or not. We are going to do the utmost for the doable to be done and to be done before the end of the month of December. That does not mean that it will be the end of the process, but it should at least create a dynamic which is irreversible by the end of the month of December, after the pledging conference that will take place in December.

We have to see what happens today. It will be a key meeting today, because of the mandate to the two delegations, the Israelis and the Palestinians, to begin writing the document that will be necessary for the final agreement at the conference in November. This sentiment was shared by the members of the Quartet but because it was shared both by the members of the Quartet and by the Arab League representatives. The Arab League representatives are, let me remind you, the Saudis, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, the Qataris and the Syrians, so a good representation of the Arab League. These representatives had a long meeting with us and came out of it with a sentiment of a certain hope of creating a dynamic that will be positive.

What are the three elements of these dynamics? To my mind three vectors are interlinked. First will be the political negotiations. Second, and necessary to match the first, will be an economic scheme to develop the life of the Palestinian people. For that, the appointment of Tony Blair to be in charge of that process was, I think, an important decision that was taken by the international community and in this case by the Quartet. And, thirdly, the situation on the ground for the Palestinians, the question of access and movement, the lifting of checkpoints. All these elements, which will be absolutely fundamental for the standard of living immediately of the Palestinian people, have to take place.

This three vectors linked together, may create a new dynamic that may end up first in the political conference in November, and secondly in the economic conference, the pledging conference, that will take place in December. I cannot go any further at this point in time because, as I said, a meeting is taking place now - as we speak - between President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert.

And what about the comprehensiveness of the process? The peace process, of course, will not only be a process of the Palestinians and the Israelis, it will be the other two tracks, very important tracks. The Syrian track and the Lebanese track. I would like to tell you that the agreement we put forward at the last meeting two Sundays ago is that those two tracks would be part of the process, without any doubt, and that we started on the same basis on which the Palestinian-Israeli track has started. That means land for peace and the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. As you know, the members of the Arab League who participated in the follow-up committee to deal with the Quartet will be invited to the conference. The participation of the Saudis, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, the Qataris and the Syrians is also a really important reassuring message for the Palestinians.

So I think that we have this situation in which a potential new dynamic may be created. If this dynamic is created we may have a situation, not of finalising the whole peace process, but of giving a very important impetus, a new dynamic, that will materialise before the end of December. I don't want to dwell more on this issue. I am sure that you will have many questions to put to me; but I just wanted to leave you with the impression that, honestly, I had when I participated in all the meetings during last week with all the important players. [...]

I did not touch on every aspect of the Middle East, which we have discussed so many times. On humanitarian issues, I have to repeat over and over again: the EU as a Union has not let the Palestinians down, not at all. It has been a constant contributor on the humanitarian front in Gaza and the West Bank. We continue to play that role. Now we are putting as much pressure as we can for a breakthrough and we are trying to get those responsible in Gaza to reach agreement and that is very well known by the Palestinians, Egyptians and Israelis. We have not managed to come to an agreement on lifting those restrictions, there are some border posts where that presence is more useful than others. And from a personal point of view I wouldn't like the Rafah forces to be pulled out because I think they are useful. No, I don't think we can be blamed for the humanitarian situation, we are doing what we can. There are others who are not willing to shoulder their responsibilities. Now, at the UN, they are doing everything they can and I think we need to pay tribute to the way that the UN agencies have behaved in Gaza. We will continue with our efforts, we will continue to support Gaza.

All its citizens, Palestinians, either there or in Ramallah, are people we have no desire or intention to abandon. We know that there are problems but we don't know what else we can do at the moment. If there is anything we could do we would do it. I have spoken with the Prime Minister Fayyad and we are making sure that officials in Gaza are getting their salaries, not just those in Ramallah. It's not easy to do this but they are trying everything possible in that direction. And Mr Fayyad is doing everything possible to try and manage a tragic and dramatic situation. But at present I can't see any way of intra-Palestinian dialogue resuming. If the political dynamic develops it might be necessary for that to be more dynamic among the Palestinians themselves. But I think the only way of getting things moving is to get a political perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. We shouldn't forget that President Abbas, in addition to being the elected leader of the Palestinians, is also the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and therefore he has to lead negotiations on behalf of all the Palestinians. He is the only one, whether in Ramallah, Gaza or the Diaspora, who can move that process forward.

So that's what we are trying at the moment and I think if it makes progress that will trigger a certain dynamic. Of course we cannot guarantee that it will work but we hope to be able to see progress and that will probably lead to some improvement on the intra-Palestinian question. But we have to keep an eye on things, it is in our interest and that is what we want to do. [...]



JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ, SOUTH AFRICA–EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP, TSHWANE, 10 OCTOBER 2007 [EXCERPTS]

Middle East

Ministers discussed current developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Ministers acknowledged the ongoing meetings between President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as a positive development in the quest for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Ministers expressed concern over the recent declaration by Israel that described the Gaza Strip as hostile territory and the effect this declaration might have on the dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza. The Ministers expressed the hope that the US sponsored Peace Conference scheduled for November 2007 will lead to a framework agreement between Israel and Palestine that would result in the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security and within internationally recognised borders.



FORMER US OFFICIALS, JOINT LETTER TO PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AND SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE ON THE PLANNED ANNAPOLIS MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE, 10 OCTOBER 2007

[This statement was a joint initiative of the US/Middle East Project, Inc. (General Brent Scowcroft, chairman, International Board, and Henry Siegman, president), the International Crisis Group (Gareth Evans, president), and the New America Foundation/American Strategy Program (Steven Clemons, director).]

The Israeli-Palestinian peace conference announced by President Bush and scheduled for November presents a genuine opportunity for progress toward a two-state solution. The Middle East remains mired in its worst crisis in years, and a positive outcome of the conference could play a critical role in stemming the rising tide of instability and violence. Because failure risks devastating consequences in the region and beyond, it is critically important that the conference succeed.

Bearing in mind the lessons of the last attempt at Camp David seven years ago at dealing with the fundamental political issues that divide the two sides, we believe that in order to be successful, the outcome of the conference must be substantive, inclusive, and relevant to the daily lives of Israelis and Palestinians.

The international conference should deal with the substance of a permanent peace: Because a comprehensive peace accord is unattainable by November, the conference should focus on the endgame and endorse the contours of a permanent peace, which in turn should be enshrined in a Security Council resolution. Israeli and Palestinian leaders should strive to reach such an agreement. If they cannot, the Quartet (US, EU, Russia, and UN Secretary General) - under whose aegis the conference ought to be held - should put forward its own outline, based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the Clinton parameters of 2000, the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, and the 2003 Road Map. It should reflect the following:

- Two states, based on the lines of June 4, 1967, with minor, reciprocal, and agreed-upon modifications as expressed in a 1:1 land swap;
- Jerusalem as home to two capitals, with Jewish neighborhoods falling under Israeli sovereignty and Arab neighborhoods under Palestinian sovereignty;
- Special arrangements for the Old City, providing each side control of its respective holy places and unimpeded access by each community to them;
- A solution to the refugee problem that is consistent with the two-state solution, addresses the Palestinian refugees' deep sense of injustice, as well as provides them with meaningful financial compensation and resettlement assistance;
- Security mechanisms that address Israeli concerns while respecting Palestinian sovereignty.

The conference should not be a one-time affair. It should set in motion credible and sustained permanent status negotiations under international supervision and with a timetable for their completion, so that both a two-state solution and the Arab Peace Initiative's full potential (normal, peaceful relations between Israel and all Arab states) can be realized.

The international conference should be inclusive:

In order to enhance Israel's confidence in the process, Arab states that currently do not enjoy diplomatic relations with Israel should attend the conference.

We commend the administration for its decision to invite Syria to the conference; it should be followed by genuine engagement. A breakthrough on this track could profoundly alter the regional landscape. At a minimum, the conference should launch Israeli-Syrian talks under international auspices.

As to Hamas, we believe that a genuine dialogue with the organization is far preferable to its isolation; it could be conducted, for example, by the UN and Quartet Middle East envoys. Promoting a cease-fire between Israel and Gaza would be a good starting point.

The international conference should produce results relevant to the daily lives of Israelis and Palestinians: Too often in the past, progress has been stymied by the gap between lofty political statements and dire realities on the ground. The conference therefore should also result in agreement on concrete steps to improve living conditions and security, including a mutual and comprehensive cease-fire in the West Bank and Gaza, an exchange of prisoners, prevention of weapons smuggling, cracking down on militias, greater Palestinian freedom of movement, the removal of unjustified checkpoints, dismantling of Israeli outposts, and other tangible measures to accelerate the process of ending the occupation.

It is of utmost importance, if the conference is to have any credibility, that it coincide with a freeze in Israeli settlement expansion. It is impossible to conduct a serious discussion on ending the occupation while settlement expansion proceeds apace. Efforts also should focus on alleviating the situation in Gaza and allowing the resumption of its economic life.

These three elements are closely interconnected; one cannot occur in the absence of the others. Unless the conference yields substantive results on permanent status, neither side will have the motivation or public support to take difficult steps on the ground. If Syria or Hamas is ostracized, prospects that they will play a spoiler role increase dramatically. This could take the shape of escalating violence from the

West Bank or from Gaza, either of which would overwhelm any political achievement, increase the political cost of compromises for both sides, and negate Israel's willingness or capacity to relax security restrictions. By the same token, a comprehensive cease-fire or prisoner exchange is not possible without Hamas's cooperation. And unless both sides see concrete improvements in their lives, political agreements are likely to be dismissed as mere rhetoric, further undercutting support for a two-state solution.

The fact that the parties and the international community appear - after a long, costly seven-year hiatus - to be thinking of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is welcome news. Because the stakes are so important, it is crucial to get it right. That means having the ambition as well as the courage to chart new ground and take bold steps.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter

Lee H. Hamilton, former Congressman and Co-chair of the Iraq Study Group

Carla Hills, former US Trade Representative under President George H.W. Bush

Nancy Kassebaum-Baker, former Senator

Thomas R. Pickering, former Under-Secretary of State under President Bill Clinton

Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Adviser to President Gerald Ford and President George H.W. Bush

Theodore C. Sorensen, former Special Counsel and Adviser to President John F. Kennedy

Paul Volcker, former Chairman of the Board of Governors of the US Federal Reserve System



EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, 2824TH GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEETING, LUXEMBOURG, 15-16 OCTOBER 2007

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council warmly welcomes the present opportunity for progress on Israel-Palestinian peace. It commends the efforts of Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and encourages them to take courageous steps in their political dialogue. This dialogue must achieve concrete results, leading to meaningful final status negotiations and to their shared goal of a two-state solution with the establishment of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.
2. The Council expresses its full support to the upcoming international meeting as set out in the Quartet statement of 23 September 2007. The Council expects this meeting to provide support to the parties in their bilateral discussions and negotiations in order to move forward urgently on a successful path to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza that will unite all Palestinians. It is a crucial opportunity for regional and international partners to effectively support a comprehensive Middle East Peace Process. It emphasizes the leading role of the Quartet in the preparation of the meeting and the implementation of its conclusions. Broad and constructive involvement by Arab States will be crucial. In this context, the EU supports the action taken forward on the Arab Peace Initiative. The Council invites the EU High Representative in full association with the Commission to examine, and where necessary, re-focus EU activities with a view to developing an EU action plan in order to further support the parties in their ongoing negotiations and the subsequent implementation period.
3. In order to consolidate the progress achieved so far and to fulfil the potential of the current process, the Council calls upon the parties to desist from any actions that threaten the viability of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, in conformity with international law. Progress in negotiations, enhanced cooperation on the ground and building Palestinian institutions should be concurrent and mutually-reinforcing processes and lead to improvements in the day to day life of the Palestinian population. The EU urges the parties to take additional steps to meet previous commitments, including those under the Road Map and the Agreement on Movement and Access.
4. The Council reiterates its full support to President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad. The Council endorses the extension of the Temporary International Mechanism until December 31, 2007 and

- stands ready to maintain its high levels of economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians and stresses that for this assistance to be effective in promoting economic development, it should accompany a credible political process. The EU reiterates the Quartet's call upon all countries able to do so to urgently provide financial support to the Palestinian Authority and undertakes to work with partners to facilitate the transition to direct international assistance as soon as possible. The Council underlines the importance of the donors' meeting in December and welcomes the offer of France to host it.
5. The Council supports the work of Quartet Representative Tony Blair in developing with the Palestinian Authority government a multi-year agenda to strengthen institutions, help to create a climate of law and order and promote economic development, and looks forward to his next progress report.
 6. The re-engagement and expansion of EUPOL COPPS is an important element in the improvement of security. To this end the Council expects Israel to provide accreditation to the mission without further delay.
 7. The Council reiterates its grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza. It underlines the importance of uninterrupted emergency and humanitarian assistance without obstruction and calls for the continued provision of essential services. The Council reiterates its call on all parties to work urgently for the opening of the crossings in and out of Gaza for both humanitarian reasons and commercial flows. This is essential to ensure the viability of the Palestinian economy and to improve living conditions for the Palestinian people.



**PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, GENERAL SECRETARIAT
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, STATEMENT REGARDING THE
DAMASCUS CONFERENCE, 28 OCTOBER 2007**

[The Hamas-led opposition planned to convene a "national conference" in Damascus to highlight their rejection of the upcoming US-sponsored conference in Annapolis scheduled for late November. The conference was initially to take place on 7 Nov. but then was postponed, reportedly in order to coincide with the Annapolis conference. Eventually it was held in Jan. 2008.]

At a time when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its Chairman Mahmoud Abbas are persistent on their political and diplomatic campaign to activate pressure factors on the Israeli government and the U.S. Administration to make the upcoming fall conference in the United States a positive event under an international umbrella in the struggle of the Palestinian people against the Israeli policies that aim at terminating the Palestinian national cause and the goals of the national struggle for self-determination, the creation of the independent Palestinian state on all the territories occupied in 1967, with the Arab Jerusalem in the forefront, and the implementation of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194.

Meanwhile, coup d'état and separatist forces, supported by regional powers who aim at improving their positions in the compromise process with the United States, surprise us with weakening the national standing and linking it to this or that regime. All throughout our long national struggle we have resisted such behavior and were careful to de-link our cause from such contradictory interests and their destructive effects on our Palestinian independent national decision-making.

The PLO supports and respects the national interests of the regional states and their natural right to liberation, development and prosperity, but the PLO distinctly distinguishes between their right and the exploitation of our national cause as a bargaining or blackmailing chip regardless of goals and motives.

Mentality of coup d'état against the national legitimacy is still in the works with the aim of aborting the Palestinian national movement, its legitimacy and national programme, within the framework of a plan to create alternative structures and institutions that serve certain regional parties, in an explicit extension of the bloody coup d'état by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which granted the Israeli occupation a free of charge present towards the abortion of the two-state solution, enabled Israel to exacerbate the isolation of our Palestinian people, and facilitated Israel's crimes against our citizens in the Gaza Strip.

Our people have aborted and will abort several conspiracies that targeted their unity and national programme; a quarter of a century ago our people aborted the conspiracy of splintering Fatah and the PLO to serve the same regional interests.

Similarly this time also our people will doom to failure all the forces that are meddling in their national fate and whoever is not pleased with the return of the Palestine Question to its international status as the core of the conflict in the Middle East, regardless of the names of these forces and where they are based.

The PLO institutions will remain stronger than the meddling of the separatist forces or the regional powers no matter how loud and noisy are their slogans.



**EUROPEAN UNION, DECLARATION BY THE EUROPEAN UNION PRESIDENCY
ON FUEL SHIPMENT CUTS TO GAZA STRIP, BRUSSELS, 31 OCTOBER 2007**

The EU notes with concern Israel's decision to reduce the supply of fuel to Gaza, an essential service to the civilian population. While condemning the unacceptable and continued attacks on Israel's territory and recognizing Israel's legitimate right to self defence, the EU underlines the need for carefully weighing the negative impact of such measures on a civilian population already living under very difficult conditions.

Mindful of the humanitarian and economic plight of the Palestinian people, the EU remains committed to continue its assistance and will do its utmost to ensure the provision of emergency and humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza, whom it will not abandon.



**US NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD, RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE
CAMPAIGN TO FREE AHMAD SA'ADAT AND ALL PALESTINIAN POLITICAL
PRISONERS, 11 NOVEMBER 2007**

Whereas, Israel currently holds over 11,000 Palestinians as political prisoners, including men, women and children, and one out of every four Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza has been subject to political arrest or detention, including 40% of Palestinian men from the West Bank and Gaza, and

Whereas, the arrest, detention and imprisonment of Palestinians is directed by a series of over 1500 Israeli military regulations that can be changed at any time by the regional military commander, and Palestinians arrested by the Israeli military are often relocated to Israeli military prisons outside the West Bank and Gaza, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and as the Israeli military continues to abduct Palestinians on a daily basis and imprison them in these military prisons, and

Whereas, Palestinians abducted by the Israeli military are subject to psychological and physical torture and abuse, especially during the period of interrogation, which can last for up to 180 days, including up to sixty days in which a Palestinian prisoner may not be seen by an attorney, and

Whereas, over half of all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees have not been tried, and

Whereas, nearly one thousand Palestinians are held in "administrative detention," a system of detention without charge or trial, that is indefinitely extensible for successive six-month periods, confronted only by secret evidence that is impossible to refute, and

Whereas, those Palestinian detainees that are tried are brought before an Israeli military court, in which Palestinians' rights to a fair trial are systematically violated, presided over by three judges, only one of which is required to have any legal training, and

Whereas, the Israeli military courts exist only as a function of the illegal military occupation, and thus can never provide a legitimate or fair trial to Palestinian political prisoners, and

Whereas, Palestinian national leaders, including Ahmad Sa'adat, General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Marwan Barghouti, Abdelaziz Dweik, Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and 39 other members of the PLC, are systematically targeted for political arrest and imprisonment, and

Whereas the most basic of political activities, including simply being a member of most Palestinian political parties, are sufficient to serve as "charges" against Palestinian political prisoners and are met with substantial sentences, and

Whereas, Ahmad Sa'adat and five other Palestinian political prisoners were arrested by the Palestinian Authority in 2002, and were transferred to Jericho Prison under U.S. and British guard as a condition of a settlement between then PA President Yasser Arafat and Israel in May 2002, and

Whereas, during his time in PA prison, Sa'adat was never charged with any crime nor tried for any offense; his release was ordered by the Palestinian High Court, and supported by numerous international organizations, including Amnesty International, and

Whereas, on March 14, 2006, the U.S. and British monitors at Jericho Prison left their posts, shortly before the inception of a ten-hour siege of the prison by the Israeli military that ended in the death of two Palestinians, the injury of twenty-three more, and the abduction of Ahmad Sa'adat and five other political prisoners from Jericho to Israeli military prisons, and

Whereas, Ahmad Sa'adat is currently facing trial for 19 political offenses, including membership in a prohibited organization, holding a post in a prohibited organization, and incitement, for giving a speech after the Israeli assassination of his predecessor, Abu Ali Mustafa, in 2001, and his trial on these charges has been repeatedly delayed and postponed, often meeting for one day and not reconvening for periods of up to three months before continuing, and

Whereas, Ahmad Sa'adat and his attorneys refuse to recognize the authority of a military court that is an instrument of occupation, and

Whereas, political imprisonment has been one part of a deliberate strategy to deprive Palestinians of their leaders, educators, writers, journalists, clergy, unionists, and popular activists from all political orientations, as part of the dispossession and repression of the Palestinian Arab people in the interests of colonialism and occupation for over sixty years, including the denial of millions of Palestinian refugees' right to return home, and

Whereas, as Ahmad Sa'adat said in his statement to the court of January 14, 2007, " This trial cannot be separated from the process of the historical struggle in Palestine that continues today between the Zionist Movement and the Palestinian people, a struggle that centers on Palestinian land, history, civilization, culture and identity," and

Whereas, there is an international campaign to free Ahmad Sa'adat, and all Palestinian political prisoners, and as the National Lawyers Guild has a history of supporting political prisoners' struggles for justice and freedom, and

Whereas, the political imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians is made possible by the billions of dollars in economic and military support as well as the vast political and diplomatic support given to Israel by the United States,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the National Lawyers Guild calls for the immediate freedom of Ahmad Sa'adat and all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

Be it further resolved, that the National Lawyers Guild shall actively support the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa'adat and all campaigns to free all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

Be it further resolved, that the NLG shall endeavor to issue statements, hold events and otherwise publicize the cases of Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and

Be it further resolved, that the NLG shall endeavor to support the struggles and organizing of Palestinian political prisoners, and the work of activists and organizations on the ground working for justice and freedom for Palestinian political prisoners, and

Be it finally resolved, that the NLG shall support, through events, statements, delegations and advocacy, the cause of freedom for which these thousands of prisoners are held - of self-determination, liberation and return for all Palestinians in exile and in all of historic Palestine.

Implementation by the NLG Middle East Subcommittee. Submitted by the Steering Committee of the NLG Middle East Subcommittee



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON
FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS ON THE ANNAPOLIS
CONFERENCE, RAMALLAH, 13 NOVEMBER 2007**

[Solana made his remarks at a joint press conference with Ahmed Qrei'a.]

We discussed the meeting to be held in Annapolis, which must be a success. It is an opportunity that must be seized. The alternative to Annapolis is failure and I am sure nobody wants that. We must keep up this new momentum and this political horizon offered by the Annapolis conference. We must use the time left to ensure that it is a success. It is difficult but it is doable. Everyone must roll up their sleeves and try to work for success at this time. Failure is not an option. We are looking at three elements: we must create a new political dynamic; we must prepare the ground for a major economic effort to help the Palestinians - for this there will be an international donors' conference in Paris in December; and before Annapolis there must be changes on the ground. The meeting in Annapolis will last a day but a day is enough to launch a new process. The process cannot be completed in a day but the important thing is to launch it.



**ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER TZIPI LIVNI, REMARKS ON ANNAPOLIS,
CABINET MEETING, JERUSALEM, 19 NOVEMBER 2007**

To understand why we are entering the process, we must define our interests and understand the developments going on around us. The region is in a process of radicalization, including religious radicalization; Islamic movements are gaining momentum and power, and using democratic processes to gain control.

Simultaneously, there are delegitimization processes in international public opinion regarding the right of Israel to exist as a national home for the Jewish people. The world understands the necessity of creating a Palestinian state, it is perceived as a clear target, but not necessarily as a complete solution to the Palestinian problem.

Israel's security issues are not a part of the international agenda to the extent we would like them to be. Therefore, Israel's interest is to try to reach understandings with moderate factions on the ground and to reinforce Israel's primary interests in these agreements: security and the creation of two national states, each of which provides a full national solution to its people, wherever they may be.

In view of the situation on the ground, we had two possibilities: To wait until the Palestinians created order and began the implementation and then start to negotiate, or to try and check the possibility of bridging the differences with the pragmatic elements on the ground without compromising on the implementation of the obligations detailed in the Roadmap.

We want to verify that we can reach a solution regarding the disputed issues, and only if there is progress regarding the implementation of obligations on the ground will we be able to continue with the implementation. We reached the formula that forms the basis of the negotiations in this manner.

Two important agreements were attained during the negotiation period: One, the principle of subordination to the Roadmap and the second, the understanding that we are at the activation stage of a process, one that has not existed for the past seven years, during which time all the related issues were placed on the table. The resolute support of the Arab world is important; sitting on the fence does not contribute anything. A bilateral dialogue must cause change in the relationship with Israel along the time axis.

I hope the Palestinians will understand the importance of the initiation of a substantial and serious process for the first time in seven years. It will not be simple, there are differences, but we must find

out for ourselves if there is a possibility of reaching an agreement with these moderate elements. If not, then in all likelihood it will be much more difficult.

If we are able to reach agreements that are acceptable to us, they will be firmly recognized by the international community as acknowledged agreements, especially with regard to security issues.

The dialogue does not and must not prevent us from taking action at anytime to contend with terrorist activities.



**LETTER BY 135 US HOUSE MEMBERS TO SECRETARY OF STATE
CONDOLEEZZA RICE, CALLING FOR EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE
MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, 20 NOVEMBER 2007**

[The letter garnered support from both Democrats and Republicans, as well as support from 12 Jewish members of Congress, including Rep. Lantos (D-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Henry Waxman (D-CA), dean of the Jewish House members.]

Dear Madam Secretary:

We are writing to both commend you for your efforts to reinvigorate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process by convening an international meeting this fall and to respectfully suggest that additional measures by the United States in the near term will be necessary to preserve the possibility of success.

As do you, we believe the coming months represent a critical opportunity to stabilize the region by advancing a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians - and perhaps a comprehensive opening of Israeli relations with the Arab world. However, it is equally clear that a still-born initiative could set back prospects for peace, destabilize regional allies, and exacerbate an already volatile situation in the Middle East

Clearly, robust, hands-on U.S. leadership and diplomacy is necessary to frame not only on what transpires at the meeting, but on what takes place before and after it. But dialogue and encouragement of the parties will not, by themselves, be sufficient. As you have made clear, the Palestinian Authority, led by President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, has emerged as a viable partner for U.S. peace efforts. The situation confronting them, however, is desperate.

Accordingly, we urge you to consider a reorientation of U.S. project-focused assistance programs. The immediate needs of the Palestinian people are for clean government, public order, economic opportunity, and salaried employment. U.S. assistance should be used-and should be designed to leverage international support-for financial and personnel reforms in the Palestinian Authority, for housing or other labor intensive projects, for the effective operation of a Palestinian police force and an independent Palestinian judiciary, and for long-term economic development and job creation programs. Addressing corruption and public safety in the P.A. while continuing to engage with Israel to coordinate a remittance schedule for Palestinian tax monies and to improve access and movement will ensure that assistance will be effective in reviving the Palestinian economy and creating the atmosphere of hope required for the success of diplomatic efforts.

In this regard, we recognize that in this critical moment, and with the current Palestinian leadership, current levels of U.S. assistance are insufficient to leverage either real change and improvement by the Palestinian Authority, or more robust support by the international community. The United States should take the lead in organizing international assistance to the Palestinian Authority which is not only consistent with the principles described above, but would suffice to cover the legitimate budgetary needs of the Palestinian Authority until it is able to muster its own resources.

U.S. assistance, though of vital importance, must be supported by a regional consensus. The current oil boom, aggressive Iranian efforts to establish hegemony and the extra-legal takeover of the Gaza Strip by

Hamas, all lend salience to your efforts to positively engage the Arab states in efforts to make peace. In concert with others, we can not allow the financial asphyxiation of the Palestinian Authority, particularly while some continue to provide or allow funding of Hamas. The extraordinary efforts being made by the President and yourself are more likely to succeed if our regional partners are working together with us.

Madam Secretary, resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, through the establishment of two states for two peoples, is too important not to seize the opportunities that have emerged over the past weeks. With aggressive multilateral diplomacy led by the United States, we believe the meeting in November could mark an important turning point. We look forward to working with you to ensure that it is a success.



**US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, SEAN MCCORMACK, STATEMENT
ANNOUNCING THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, 20 NOVEMBER 2007**

Announcement of Annapolis Conference

On November 27, the United States will host Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, Palestinian Authority President Abbas, along with the Members of the Quartet, the Members of the Arab League Follow-on Committee, the G-8, the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and other key international actors for a conference at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Secretary Rice will host a dinner the preceding evening here in Washington, where President Bush will deliver remarks. President Bush and the Israeli and Palestinian leaders will deliver speeches to open the formal conference in Annapolis.

The Annapolis Conference will signal broad international support for the Israeli and Palestinian leaders' courageous efforts, and will be a launching point for negotiations leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Those invited to attend the conference are:

United States, Israel, Palestinian Authority, Algeria, Arab League Secretary General, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, EU Commission, EU High Rep, EU Pres Portugal, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Quartet Special Envoy Tony Blair, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, UNSYG, Yemen

Observers: IMF, World Bank



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
PEACE PROCESS, 2831ST GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 20 NOVEMBER 2007**

MIDDLE EAST

Middle East peace process - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

The Council reiterates its strong support for the upcoming international meeting at Annapolis and the efforts of Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. It looks forward to the achievement of concrete results leading to meaningful final status negotiations. These should result in a two state solution with the establishment of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. The Council reaffirms

that this is a crucial opportunity for regional and international partners to effectively support a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. In this context, the Council calls for a continued broad and positive involvement by Arab partners, building on the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Council expresses its full commitment to further support the parties in their ongoing negotiations and subsequent implementation. In this context, the Council welcomes the EU Action Strategy submitted by the EU High Representative in full association with the Commission, which will be the basis for further work by the EU taking into account the results of the Annapolis International meeting.

In order to consolidate progress achieved so far and to fulfil the potential of the current process, the Council urges both parties to take additional steps to meet previous commitments, including those under the Road Map and the Agreement on Movement and Access. The Council calls upon the parties to desist from any actions that threaten the viability of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, in conformity with international law.

The Council also emphasizes the importance of the Paris Donors' Conference, in December, and supports its goals of securing funding for the building of the institutions and economy of the future Palestinian state. In this context, the Council calls for the mobilisation of significant international financial support.



**JOINT PAPER BY EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE JAVIER SOLANA AND
EU COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS BENITA FERRERO-WALDNER
ON 'STATEBUILDING FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST: AN EU ACTION
STRATEGY,' 20 NOVEMBER 2007**

*[The EU Council of Foreign Ministers endorsed the document
on 26 Nov., a day before the Annapolis Summit.]*

NEW MOMENTUM IN THE PEACE PROCESS

Recent developments have created a sense of cautious optimism for progress towards resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert are engaged in a substantive and wide-ranging bilateral dialogue. The United States Government is actively supporting their efforts, including by calling for an international meeting before the end of the year, in order to launch a bilateral negotiation process that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. The new momentum in the peace process benefits from the full backing and active involvement of the Quartet. Arab support has been expressed through the voice of the Arab League follow-up Committee.

Comprehensive peace in the Middle East is a strategic objective for the European Union. Any lasting and just settlement to the conflict should be based on the principle of land for peace, relevant UNSC resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Roadmap and previous agreements reached between the parties.

The EU considers that the present opportunity should not be missed and is ready to take its responsibilities, in accordance with the vital European interests involved. The EU is therefore committed to supporting current efforts in a serious and substantive way, offering a comprehensive and coherent contribution to the process, including during the crucial implementation period.

The European Union calls on all other interested parties to support the current process, bearing in mind the high cost of failure for everyone involved.

The forthcoming international meeting in Annapolis should launch a bilateral negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians on final status issues, as a first step towards a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It should establish a robust follow-up process under the auspices of the Quartet and with the involvement of the international community.

The EU calls on its Quartet, Arab League and other international partners to contribute to the success of the upcoming donors conference in Paris, which will constitute an indispensable complement to the political process launched at Annapolis.

To accompany a credible political process the European Union commits to:

- Support the Parties in their bilateral efforts;
- Support the US Government in its current facilitation efforts;
- Ensure the active involvement of the Quartet in the run-up to the international meeting and in its follow-up;
- Continue cooperation with Arab partners in advancing the Arab Peace Initiative.
- Sustain its high levels of support to the region and accompany the political process with a shift to post-conflict support in due time.

SUBSTANTIVE SUPPORT TO A SUBSTANTIVE PROCESS

Only an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state can be a reliable neighbour for Israel. The EU's commitment will therefore focus on assisting Palestinian state building efforts as well as providing support for the transition period. We will strengthen ongoing activities and adjust our priorities in light of developments in the political process, working in partnership with the Palestinian Authority government. The results of the Annapolis meeting and the kind of process it will set in motion will determine the pace and the extent of these adjustments.

Developments on the ground will also play an important part in creating the conditions for success at Annapolis and beyond. Israelis and Palestinians will have to fulfil their responsibilities in that respect, by refraining from measures and decisions which undermine the bilateral process, and by pursuing efforts to improve security and lift obstacles to access and movement. International monitoring and assistance will be crucial for progress in this area.

Palestinian Statebuilding

- Supporting the establishment of modern and democratic police forces, in full cooperation with the US Security Coordinator. The EU will expand the work of its existing police mission to cover training, equipment and reconstruction of police, prison and training facilities. Our assistance to the civil police will be complemented by wider support to the rule of law, including helping to establish an efficient penal and judiciary system.
- Comprehensive institution building and good governance. For over a decade the EU has been at the forefront of efforts to empower the PA via institution building and its work in the Jerusalem based "Governance Strategy Group". The EU foresees intensifying these activities, in areas which complement PA plans, for example health, education and the judiciary.
- Support for sustained growth of the Palestinian economy. We will build on existing support to the Palestinian private sector including credit guarantees, vocational training and trade facilitation. These efforts will have a positive effect on the PA's revenues.
- Customs and trade: the EU will build on its activities in this area, inter alia by providing technological solutions for the swift control of goods passing through the borders of the future Palestinian state, and supporting the PA's efforts to develop its trade policy and institutions (such as an agency dealing with customs and border issues). The EU is ready to resume the work of its trilateral trade policy group.

Support for the transition period

- Support to sustainable PA finances. Achieving a sustainable financial situation will require support to public recurrent and development expenditure, but also the generation of adequate revenues. The EU will continue to encourage private sector activity as well as its institution building work in the area of customs/ tax revenues and accountability of public finances.

- Planning modalities for institution building and economic revival, as well as the implementation of projects with quick impact on the ground, will be closely coordinated with Quartet Representative Tony Blair. Active involvement of the Palestinian Authority is necessary for these efforts to have their full effect, in line with the priorities set out in its Reform and Development Plan. In parallel, Israeli cooperation is needed for their implementation, in particular with respect to access and movement as a pre-requisite for Palestinian economic revival.
- Emergency and humanitarian support: the EU will continue to deliver various forms of aid in the West Bank and Gaza. It will sustain its provision of fuel, which is vital for the continued provision of electricity and clean water; its allowances to low income families; and its support to Palestinian refugees. In Gaza, the EU will design its programmes and activities so as to contribute to the unity and contiguity of the future Palestinian state.

Support for Conflict Resolution

- East Jerusalem: part of building a Palestinian state involves resolving the status of Jerusalem. For many years the EU has supported hospitals, schools and community centres for the people of East Jerusalem. In the context of a political process, these activities could be stepped up.
- Refugees: Since 1971 the EU has been providing significant support to the work of agencies providing vital services to the Palestinian refugees (UNRWA). It is committed to adapting this support as appropriate, in pursuit of a just and equitable solution to the refugee issue.
- Security arrangements: if requested, the EU will be ready in due course to contribute to a system of security arrangements that would be agreed between the parties in the framework of a permanent settlement.

It is our view that the range of support offered by the EU will assist the parties in taking the steps necessary to achieve conflict resolution and the two-state solution. As the process develops, the European Union is ready to help meet the expectations of all regional parties and realise the dividends of peace. In that context, it will continue to work with Israel to upgrade bilateral relations.

The EU will also make full use of existing instruments and frameworks to leverage the benefits of regional cooperation for post-conflict rehabilitation, sustained economic and social development and regional security.



UN COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, STATEMENT ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 (1967), NEW YORK, 21 NOVEMBER 2007

This week marks the fortieth anniversary of the adoption by the Security Council on 22 November 1967 of resolution 242. “Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war”, the Council called in this resolution for “the withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied” in the conflict. The Council further affirmed the necessity for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem. Although the message of the resolution is clear, four decades later, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem remain under Israeli military occupation. Until this day, the Palestinian people has been denied the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in its own land. It is for this reason that the political significance of resolution 242 needs restating today.

Since 1967, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People have repeatedly called upon Israel to live up to its obligations as the occupying Power under international humanitarian law. The Palestinian civilian population, who was to be protected under the Fourth Geneva Convention, has suffered exceedingly long subjected to daily violence, subjugation and humiliation. Moreover, the occupying Power has continued to create illegal facts on the ground by confiscating vast areas of Palestinian land, constructing

and expanding settlements, establishing settler outposts, moving its own population to the Occupied Territory. The separation wall being constructed in the Occupied West Bank and around East Jerusalem has substantially worsened the conditions of occupation through taking additional land from the Palestinians, separating Palestinians from Palestinians, and further complicating their movement. In light of this, the Committee strongly urges the world community, especially the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to take appropriate and urgent action in accordance with its Article 1 to ensure respect for the Convention.

The Committee reiterates that the occupation is the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. Israel must withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan in keeping with resolution 242 and as further reinforced in resolution 338 (1973) and numerous subsequent Security Council resolutions. Resolution 242 has been at the centre of all attempts to resolve the present conflict. Also, the principle of land for peace has been recognized as the basis for any peace negotiations by the parties and constitutes the foundation of all current initiatives, including the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Committee calls on the Security Council to act decisively in implementation of its own resolutions with respect to the question of Palestine, in particular resolutions 242 and 338. The Committee is also hopeful that, as the principal United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council will live up to its obligations under the United Nations Charter. The Committee for its part will continue to fulfil its General Assembly mandate aimed at helping the Palestinian people realize its inalienable rights with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine.

Text of Resolution: The full text of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), adopted unanimously at the 1382nd meeting, reads as follows:

“The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. *Affirms* that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

- (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
- (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. *Affirms* further the necessity

- (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
- (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
- (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.”



**UN COMMITTEE ON THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, STATEMENT APPROVING FOUR DRAFT TEXTS,
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, 21 NOVEMBER 2007**

The General Assembly would demand that Israel comply with its obligations under international law and immediately cease construction of the separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, according to a draft resolution - one of three - approved this afternoon by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Committee also adopted a draft statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Security Council's adoption of resolution 242 (1967). The three other draft resolutions called for measures to be taken by the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information on the question of Palestine and in light of recent developments in the Middle East.

According to the first text on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the Assembly would demand that Israel stop building the wall, completely cease all Israeli settlement activities in the Territory and in the Occupied Syrian Golan, and fully implement relevant Security Council resolutions. Further to the draft, the Assembly would call upon Israel to cease its unilateral actions in the Territory aimed at altering its status and character including by land annexation, thus prejudicing the final outcome of peace negotiations.

The Assembly would call upon the parties to the conflict, with the support of the Quartet (United Nations, United States, European Union and Russian Federation) and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to immediately resume direct peace negotiations to conclude a final settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Madrid Conference and the "Road Map".

Further to that draft, the Assembly would stress the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres, by removing all Israeli checkpoints erected within the Territory, as well as the immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror. It would stress the need for both parties to fully implement the 15 November 2005 Agreement on Movement and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing and for Israel to cease its closures of all crossings in and out of Gaza, which had devastated the socio-economic situation there, and to allow for the unimpeded movement and access of humanitarian personnel and supplies.

The Assembly would also stress the need for Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem; the realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and an independent State; and a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. It would urge Member States to expedite economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinians to alleviate their current humanitarian crisis.

Under the terms of the text on the Committee, the Assembly would request it to fulfil its mandate aimed at helping the Palestinian people realize its inalienable rights with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. The Committee would also be requested to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people.

The draft on the Secretariat's Division for Palestinian Rights would have the Assembly ask the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources to carry out its work programme, including consulting with the Committee and monitoring developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

According to the draft on public information, the Assembly would consider that the Palestine special information programme on the question of Palestine was very useful in raising international aware-

ness and was effectively helping to create an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process. It would ask that the Public Information Department, in full cooperation with the Committee, continue its special information programme in the 2007-2008 biennium, in particular, to disseminate information, update publications on peace efforts, expand audio-visual materials and organize fact-finding news missions, seminars and training events for journalists.

The statement, orally revised during the meeting, on the fortieth anniversary of the Security Council's adoption of resolution 242 (1967), recalls the text, by which the Council emphasized "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war", and called for "the withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied" in the conflict. Although the resolution was clear, four decades later, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem remained under Israeli military occupation, and the Palestinian people had been denied the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in their own land. The Committee called for a reinstatement of resolution 242 (1967) today.

The Palestinian civilian population had suffered exceedingly, long subjected to daily violence, subjugation and humiliation, the statement also said. The occupying Power continued to confiscate vast areas of Palestinian land, constructing and expanding settlements, establishing settler outposts, moving its own population to the Occupied Territory. The separation wall being constructed in the Occupied West Bank and around East Jerusalem had substantially worsened the conditions of occupation, separated Palestinians from Palestinians, and further complicated their movement.

The Committee strongly urged the world community, especially the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to take appropriate and urgent action in accordance with its article 1, to ensure respect for the Convention. (For the text of the full statement, see Press Release GA/PAL/1067.)

The Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, said that there had not been any significant change on the ground regarding the suffering of Palestinians. Incursions had continued in Gaza and the West Bank, including in villages that had demonstrated peacefully against the separation wall. Scores of individuals were injured weekly by the Israeli army for non-violent resistance. There were now 560 checkpoints in the West Bank and more than 11,000 Palestinian prisoners in jail. Israeli authorities occasionally released a few hundred prisoners, but then detained a few hundred more. The isolation of the Gaza Strip continued, suffocating the local population and exacerbating the difficult humanitarian situation there.

Palestinian officials were engaging in intense negotiations with their Israeli counterparts to prepare for the United States-sponsored meeting, to begin on 26 November, in Annapolis, Maryland, he said. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas had met on Wednesday, but he could not report that both sides were close to concluding a serious, substantive document to be submitted at Annapolis.

He urged that a peace treaty be negotiated in a reasonable time period, such as six months, and he appealed to all of Palestine's friends, especially those with good relations with Israel, to exert all efforts to allow both sides to evolve such a document that addressed the conflict's core issues.

The Palestinian leadership had been receiving many Heads of State and foreign ministers recently, and it appreciated their efforts to help reach common language for a peace treaty, he noted. President Abbas would also attend an important meeting of Arab foreign ministers to decide how to collectively advance a clear Arab strategy in Annapolis on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative.

He added that the Annapolis meeting came at a significant time, during the fortieth anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and adoption of General Assembly resolution 181. Earlier today, the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) approved, by 172 votes in favour to 5 against, with 5 abstentions, a resolution affirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Also this morning, during the Security Council's meeting on protection of civilians in armed conflict, the Palestinian delegation pointed out the inaccuracies in the Secretary-

General's report on that subject with regard to suicide bombings in Israel. The report stated that such bombings had risen, when evidence on the ground showed that the opposite, in fact, was true. He stressed the importance of correcting such falsifications.

Committee Chairman, Paul Badji (Senegal) noted that the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would take place on 29 November, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Assembly debate on the question of Palestine would also begin on that day. He also noted the opening of the Palestinian cultural exhibit, entitled "Palestine: A Continuing Legacy", which would take place at the public lobby of the General Assembly building at 6 p.m., followed by a concert by Palestinian-American musician, Simon Shaheen, performing Arab classical musical infused with jazz.

The Committee was established in 1975 by the General Assembly to recommend a programme of implementation to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, and to return to their homes and property. The Committee reports annually to the Assembly, which had expanded the Committee's mandate and established the Division for Palestinian Rights within the Secretariat. Chaired by Senegal, the Committee has 22 members and 26 observers.

The Committee had welcomed the 1991 Madrid peace process and the 1993 Declaration of Principles. It supported the two-State paradigm in which Israel and Palestine live side by side within secure and recognized borders. It had also welcomed the Road Map laid out for achieving that goal, as set out by the Quartet. The Committee will meet again at a time to be announced.



**US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, STATEMENT ON THE ANNAPOLIS
CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, DC, 26 NOVEMBER 2007**

I am pleased to welcome Prime Minister (Ehud) Olmert, President (Mahmoud) Abbas and representatives of more than 40 countries to the United States for the Nov. 27 Annapolis Conference. The broad attendance at this conference by regional states and other key international participants demonstrates the international resolve to seize this important opportunity to advance freedom and peace in the Middle East.

This conference will signal international support for the Israelis' and Palestinians' intention to commence negotiations on the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of peace between these two peoples.

It will also provide an opportunity for the Israelis, the Palestinians and their neighbors to recommit to implementing the roadmap, with the U.S. monitoring their progress by the parties' agreement. Finally, the conference will review Palestinian plans to build the institutions of a democratic state and their preparations for next month's donors' conference in Paris.

I remain personally committed to implementing my vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

The Israelis and Palestinians have waited a long time for this vision to be realized, and I call upon all those gathering in Annapolis this week to redouble their efforts to turn dreams of peace into reality. I look forward to my discussions with Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas this week, as well as to addressing the conference along with them on Tuesday.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET IN SUPPORT OF THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, DC, 26 NOVEMBER 2007

The Quartet Principals - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in Washington to discuss the situation in the Middle East ahead of the upcoming Annapolis Conference. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

The Quartet expressed strong support for the November 27 Annapolis Conference. It welcomed the commitment of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to launch bilateral negotiations toward the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and the realization of Israeli-Palestinian peace. This reflects the results of months of work by the parties and by the Quartet, including the Quartet's engagement with members of the Arab League Follow-Up Committee to expand the circle of support for peace. The Quartet welcomed the parties' continuing efforts to fulfill their respective commitments under Phase One of the Roadmap and urged the international community to provide robust support for all the parties' efforts. Principals took note of the broad international support for the Annapolis Conference, and looked forward to the December Paris Donors' Conference to muster international financial backing for efforts to build the foundation for a viable and prosperous Palestinian state. The Quartet agreed to remain closely involved, and to that end will meet again in December, and looks forward to inviting members of the Arab League Follow-Up Committee to attend.

The Quartet affirmed its commitment to seize this opportunity to mobilize international support to achieve meaningful progress towards a just and lasting negotiated settlement to this conflict, and ultimately a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.



US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, REMARKS AT THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, 27 NOVEMBER 2007

Thank you for coming. Prime Minister Olmert, President Abbas, Secretary General Ban, former Prime Minister Blair, distinguished guests: Welcome to one of the finest institutes we have in America, the United States Naval Academy. We appreciate you joining us in what I believe is an historic opportunity to encourage the expansion of freedom and peace in the Holy Land.

We meet to lay the foundation for the establishment of a new nation - a democratic Palestinian state that will live side by side with Israel in peace and security. We meet to help bring an end to the violence that has been the true enemy of the aspirations of both the Israelis and Palestinians.

We're off to a strong start. I'm about to read a statement that was agreed upon by our distinguished guests:

The representatives of the government of the state of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, represented respectively by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and President Mahmoud Abbas in his capacity as Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and President of the Palestinian Authority, have convened in Annapolis, Maryland, under the auspices of President George W. Bush of the United States of America, and with the support of the participants of this international conference, having concluded the following joint understanding.

We express our determination to bring an end to bloodshed, suffering and decades of conflict between our peoples; to usher in a new era of peace, based on freedom, security, justice, dignity, respect and mutual recognition; to propagate a culture of peace and nonviolence; to confront terrorism and incitement, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis. In furtherance of the goal of two states, Israel

and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, we agree to immediately launch good-faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty, resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, as specified in previous agreements.

We agree to engage in vigorous, ongoing and continuous negotiations, and shall make every effort to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008. For this purpose, a steering committee, led jointly by the head of the delegation of each party, will meet continuously, as agreed. The steering committee will develop a joint work plan and establish and oversee the work of negotiations teams to address all issues, to be headed by one lead representative from each party. The first session of the steering committee will be held on 12 December 2007.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert will continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis to follow up the negotiations in order to offer all necessary assistance for their advancement.

The parties also commit to immediately implement their respective obligations under the performance-based road map to a permanent two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, issued by the Quartet on 30 April 2003 - this is called the road map - and agree to form an American, Palestinian and Israeli mechanism, led by the United States, to follow up on the implementation of the road map.

The parties further commit to continue the implementation of the ongoing obligations of the road map until they reach a peace treaty. The United States will monitor and judge the fulfillment of the commitment of both sides of the road map. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, implementation of the future peace treaty will be subject to the implementation of the road map, as judged by the United States.

Congratulations for your strong leadership. (Applause.)

The Palestinian people are blessed with many gifts and talents. They want the opportunity to use those gifts to better their own lives and build a better future for their children. They want the dignity that comes with sovereignty and independence. They want justice and equality under the rule of law. They want freedom from violence and fear.

The people of Israel have just aspirations, as well. They want their children to be able to ride a bus or to go to school without fear of suicide bombers. They want an end to rocket attacks and constant threats of assault. They want their nation to be recognized and welcomed in the region where they live.

Today, Palestinians and Israelis each understand that helping the other to realize their aspirations is key to realizing their own aspirations - and both require an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state. Such a state will provide Palestinians with the chance to lead lives of freedom and purpose and dignity. Such a state will help provide the Israelis with something they have been seeking for generations: to live in peace with their neighbors.

Achieving this goal is not going to be easy - if it were easy, it would have happened a long time ago. To achieve freedom and peace, both Israelis and Palestinians will have to make tough choices. Both sides are sober about the work ahead, but having spent time with their leaders, they are ready to take on the tough issues. As Prime Minister Olmert recently put it, "We will avoid none of [the historic questions], we will not run from discussing any of them." As President Abbas has said: "I believe that there is an opportunity not only for us but for the Israelis, too. We have a historic and important opportunity that we must benefit from." It is with that spirit that we concluded - that they concluded this statement I just read.

Our purpose here in Annapolis is not to conclude an agreement. Rather, it is to launch negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. For the rest of us, our job is to encourage the parties in this effort - and to give them the support they need to succeed.

In light of recent developments, some have suggested that now is not the right time to pursue peace. I disagree. I believe now is precisely the right time to begin these negotiations - for a number of reasons:

First, the time is right because Palestinians and Israelis have leaders who are determined to achieve peace. President Abbas seeks to fulfill his people's aspirations for statehood, dignity and security. President Abbas understands that a Palestinian state will not be born of terror, and that terrorism is the enemy standing in the way of a state. He and Prime Minister Fayyad have both declared, without hesitation, that they are opposed to terrorism and committed to peace. They're committed to turning these declarations into actions on the ground to combat terror.

The emergence of responsible Palestinian leaders has given Israeli leaders the confidence they need to reach out to the Palestinians in true partnership. Prime Minister Olmert has expressed his understanding of the suffering and indignities felt by the Palestinian people. He's made clear that the security of Israel will be enhanced by the establishment of a responsible, democratic Palestinian state. With leaders of courage and conviction on both sides, now is the time to come together and seek the peace that both sides desire.

Second, the time is right because a battle is underway for the future of the Middle East - and we must not cede victory to the extremists. With their violent actions and contempt for human life, the extremists are seeking to impose a dark vision on the Palestinian people - a vision that feeds on hopelessness and despair to sow chaos in the Holy Land. If this vision prevails, the future of the region will be endless terror, endless war, and endless suffering.

Standing against this dark vision are President Abbas and his government. They are offering the Palestinian people an alternative vision for the future - a vision of peace, a homeland of their own, and a better life. If responsible Palestinian leaders can deliver on this vision, they will deal the forces of extremism a devastating blow. And when liberty takes root in the rocky soil of the West Bank and Gaza, it will inspire millions across the Middle East who want their societies built on freedom and peace and hope.

By contrast, if Palestinian reformers cannot deliver on this hopeful vision, then the forces of extremism and terror will be strengthened, a generation of Palestinians could be lost to the extremists, and the Middle East will grow in despair. We cannot allow this to happen. Now is the time to show Palestinians that their dream of a free and independent state can be achieved at the table of peace - and that the terror and violence preached by Palestinian extremists is the greatest obstacle to a Palestinian state.

Third, the time is right because the world understands the urgency of supporting these negotiations. We appreciate that representatives from so many governments and international institutions have come to join us here in Annapolis - especially the Arab world. We're here because we recognize what is at stake. We are here because we each have a vital role to play in helping Palestinians forge the institutions of a free society. We're here because we understand that the success of these efforts to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians will have an impact far beyond the Holy Land.

These are the reasons we've gathered here in Annapolis. And now we begin the difficult work of freedom and peace. The United States is proud to host this meeting - and we reaffirm the path to peace set out in the road map. Yet in the end, the outcome of the negotiations they launch here depends on the Israelis and Palestinians themselves. America will do everything in our power to support their quest for peace, but we cannot achieve it for them. The success of these efforts will require that all parties show patience and flexibility - and meet their responsibilities.

For these negotiations to succeed, the Palestinians must do their part. They must show the world they understand that while the borders of a Palestinian state are important, the nature of a Palestinian state is just as important. They must demonstrate that a Palestinian state will create opportunity for all its citizens, and govern justly, and dismantle the infrastructure of terror. They must show that a Palestinian state will accept its responsibility, and have the capability to be a source of stability and peace - for its own citizens, for the people of Israel, and for the whole region.

The Israelis must do their part. They must show the world that they are ready to begin - to bring an end to the occupation that began in 1967 through a negotiated settlement. This settlement will establish Palestine as a Palestinian homeland, just as Israel is a homeland for the Jewish people. Israel must

demonstrate its support for the creation of a prosperous and successful Palestinian state by removing unauthorized outposts, ending settlement expansion, and finding other ways for the Palestinian Authority to exercise its responsibilities without compromising Israel's security.

Arab states also have a vital role to play. Relaunching the Arab League initiative and the Arab League's support for today's conference are positive steps. All Arab states should show their strong support for the government of President Abbas - and provide needed assistance to the Palestinian Authority. Arab states should also reach out to Israel, work toward the normalization of relations, and demonstrate in both word and deed that they believe that Israel and its people have a permanent home in the Middle East. These are vital steps toward the comprehensive peace that we all seek.

Finally, the international community has important responsibilities. Prime Minister Fayyad is finalizing a plan to increase openness and transparency and accountability throughout Palestinian society - and he needs the resources and support from the international community. With strong backing from those gathered here, the Palestinian government can build the free institutions that will support a free Palestinian state.

The United States will help Palestinian leaders build these free institutions - and the United States will keep its commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish state and homeland for the Jewish people.

The United States strongly feels that these efforts will yield the peace that we want - and that is why we will continue to support the Lebanese people. We believe democracy brings peace. And democracy in Lebanon is vital, as well, for the peace in the Middle East. Lebanese people are in the process of electing a president. That decision is for the Lebanese people to make - and they must be able to do so free from outside interference and intimidation. As they embark on this process, the people of Lebanon can know that the American people stand with them - and we look forward to the day when the people of Lebanon can enjoy the blessings of liberty without fear of violence or coercion.

The task begun here at Annapolis will be difficult. This is the beginning of the process, not the end of it - and no doubt a lot of work remains to be done. Yet the parties can approach this work with confidence. The time is right. The cause is just. And with hard effort, I know they can succeed.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert, I pledge to devote my effort during my time as President to do all I can to help you achieve this ambitious goal. I give you my personal commitment to support your work with the resources and resolve of the American government. I believe a day is coming when freedom will yield the peace we desire. And the land that is holy to so many will see the light of peace.

The day is coming when Palestinians will enjoy the blessings that freedom brings - and all Israelis will enjoy the security they deserve. That day is coming. The day is coming when the terrorists and extremists who threaten the Israeli and Palestinian people will be marginalized and eventually defeated. And when that day comes, future generations will look to the work we began here at Annapolis. They will give thanks to the leaders who gathered on the banks of the Chesapeake for their vision, their wisdom and courage to choose a future of freedom and peace.

Thanks for coming. May God bless their work. (Applause.)



**ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT, SPEECH AT THE ANNAPOLIS
CONFERENCE, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, 27 NOVEMBER 2007**

The honorable president of the United States, George Bush, my colleague, president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, heads of delegations, and distinguished guests,

I came here today from Jerusalem, Mr. President, at your invitation, to extend, on behalf of the people of Israel and the state of Israel, to the Palestinian people and to our neighboring Arab states, to extend a hand in peace, a hand which marks the beginning of historic reconciliation between us and you, the Palestinians, and all of the Arab nations.

I had many good reasons not to come here to this meeting. Memory of failures in the near and distant past weighed heavy upon us. The dreadful terrorism perpetrated by Palestinian terrorist organizations has affected thousands of Israeli citizens, has destroyed families and has tried to disrupt the lives of the citizens of Israel.

I witnessed this when I served as mayor of Jerusalem in days of bombings at cafes, on buses, and in recreational centers in Jerusalem, as well as in other cities in the state of Israel.

The ongoing shooting of Qassam rockets against tens of thousands of residents in the south of Israel, particularly in the city of Sderot, serves as a warning sign, one which we cannot overlook.

The absence of governmental institutions and effective law enforcement mechanisms, the role of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the ongoing activity of murderous organizations throughout all the territories of the Palestinian Authority, the absence of a legal system that meets the basic criteria of democratic government, all of these are factors which deter us from moving forward too hastily.

I am not overlooking any of these obstacles which are liable to emerge along the way. I see them. But I came here, despite the concerns and the doubts and the hesitations to say to you, President Mahmoud Abbas, and through you to your people, and to the entire Arab world, the time has come.

We no longer and you no longer have the privilege of adhering to dreams which are (inaudible) from the sufferings of our peoples, the hardships that they experience daily, and the burden of living under ongoing uncertainty, which offers no hope of change or of a better future.

We want peace. We demand an end to terror, an end to incitement and to hatred. We are prepared to make a painful compromise, rife with risks, in order to realize these aspirations.

I came here today not in order to settle historical accounts between us and you about what caused the confrontations and the hatred, and what for many years has prevented a compromise, a settlement of peace.

I want to tell you from the bottom of my heart that I acknowledge the fact I know that alongside the constant suffering that many in Israel have experienced, because of our history, because of the wars, the terrorism and the hatred toward us, a suffering that has always been part of our lives in our land, your people, too, have suffered for many years; and there are some who still suffer.

Many Palestinians have been living for decades in camps, disconnected from the environment in which they grew up, wallowing in poverty, in neglect, alienation, bitterness, and a deep, unrelenting sense of humiliation.

I know that this pain and this humiliation are the deepest foundations which fomented the ethos of hatred toward us. We are not indifferent to this suffering. We are not oblivious to the tragedies that you have experienced.

I believe that, in the course of negotiations between us, we will find the right way, as part of an international effort, in which we will participate, to assist these Palestinians in finding a proper framework for their future, in the Palestinian state that will be established in the territories agreed upon between us.

Israel will be part of an international mechanism that will assist in finding a solution to this problem.

The negotiations between us will not take place here in Annapolis but rather in our home and in your home. These negotiations will be bilateral, direct, ongoing, and continuous, in an effort to complete the process in the course of 2008.

The negotiations will address all of the issues which we have thus far avoided dealing with.

We will do this directly, openly and courageously. We will not avoid any subject. We will deal with all the core issues.

I am convinced that the reality that emerged in our region in 1967 will change significantly.

This will be an extremely difficult process for many of us, but it is nevertheless inevitable. I know this. Many of my people know this. We are prepared for it.

In the course of the negotiations, we will use previous agreements as a point of departure. U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the road map, and the letter of President Bush to the prime minister of Israel dated April 14, 2004.

When the negotiations are concluded, I believe that we shall be able to arrive at an agreement that will fulfill the vision expressed by President Bush: two states for two peoples, a peace-seeking Palestinian state, a viable, strong, democratic and terror-free state for the Palestinian people; and the state of Israel, Jewish and democratic, living in security and free from the threat of terrorism, the national home of the Jewish people.

Clearly the implementation of the agreement will be subject to the implementation of all obligations in the road map with all of its phases and according to its complete sequence, as concluded between us from the very beginning.

We will abide by all of our obligations, and so will you.

The agreement with you and its gradual implementation, cautiously and responsibly, is part of a much wider whole which will lead us, I believe and hope, to peace, to a peace agreement with all of the Arab states.

There isn't a single Arab state in the north, in the east or in the south with which we do not seek peace. There isn't a single Muslim state with which we do not want to establish diplomatic relations.

Anyone who wants to make peace with us, we say to them, from the bottom of our hearts (SPEAKING IN HEBREW) welcome.

I am pleased to see here in this hall representatives of Arab countries. Most of them do not have diplomatic relations with Israel. The time has come for you as well.

We cannot continue to stand by indefinitely and to watch the - watch you standing and watching from the sidelines, watching the peace train, as it were, going by. The time has come to end the boycott, the alienation and the obliviousness toward the state of Israel. It does not help you and it hurts us.

I am familiar with the Arab peace initiative, which was born in Riyadh, affirmed in Beirut and recently reaffirmed by you in Riyadh.

I value this initiative, I acknowledge its importance, and I highly appreciate its contribution. I have no doubt that we will continue to refer to it in the course of the negotiations between us and the Palestinian leadership.

The Arab world represented here by many countries is a vital component in creating a new reality in the Middle East. The peace signed between Israel and Egypt, and subsequently between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a solid foundation of stability and hope in our region.

This peace is an example and a model of the relations that we can build with Arab states. My close relations with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and with His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan are extremely significant for the process of building trust and understanding with the Arab states.

However, these relations, important though they may be, are not enough. We aspire for normalization with those Arab states which eschew as much as we do radical and fanatical fundamentalism and which seek to grant their citizens a more moderate, tolerant and prosperous world. This is an interest that all of us share.

There is quite a lot that separates us. There are memories, there is a heritage, that do not emanate from the same historical roots. We have different ways of living, different customs. And the spontaneous emotional identification that you feel with our neighboring Arab countries, which have been trapped for a long time in this age-old, bloody conflict between us.

Nevertheless, there is also a great deal that we share. Like us, you know that religious fanaticism and national extremism are a perfect recipe for domestic instability, for violence, for bitterness and, ultimately, for the disintegration of the very foundations of coexistence based on tolerance and mutual acceptance.

We are a small country with a small population, but rich in good will and with a significant ability to create a partnership that will lead to prosperity, to growth, to economic development, and to stability for the entire region.

From here, from Annapolis, we can come forth with a message of a new political horizon, renewed hope, not only for the Palestinians and the Israelis but also, together with you, for the entire region.

Mr. President of the United States, my colleague Mahmoud Abbas, distinguished guests, almost two years ago, under very sad circumstances, the prime minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, was no longer able to carry the heavy responsibility of leading the state of Israel and this responsibility was passed on to me, first as a result of formal procedures and subsequently on the basis of an election in Israel's democratic system of government.

Prior to my election, I stated that my heart's desire and the desire of my people was to achieve a peace agreement, first and foremost with the Palestinian people.

This is what I believed then, and this is what I continue to believe in now, with all my heart. The past two years have been difficult for all of us.

The hardships have not been alleviated. The terrorist organizations have not been weakened. The enemies of peace have not disappeared. And we are still anxiously awaiting the return of our missing and captive sons who are being held by terrorist organizations.

I long for the day when I can see Gilad, Eldad and Udi back with their families. And I will continue relentlessly in my efforts to achieve their release.

I believe that there is no path other than the path of peace. I believe that there is no just solution other than the solution of two national states for two peoples. I believe that there is no path that does not involve painful compromise for you, the Palestinians, and for us, the Israelis.

I would like to thank you, President of United States George Bush, an ally in the path of peace, for your willingness, for the preparedness of your government, your administration, and for the assistance of the secretary of state, Ms. Rice, to assist us in the historical process of peace and reconciliation between us and our neighbors.

I believe that the time has come. We are ready. I invite you, my friend, Mahmoud Abbas, and your people to join us in this long and tormenting and complex path for which there is no substitute.

Together, we shall start. Together, we shall arrive. Thank you very much.



**PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS, SPEECH AT THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE,
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, 27 NOVEMBER 2007**

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious Most Merciful

President Bush, Prime Minister Olmert, Ministers and Representatives of Participating States, Distinguished Guests,

Peace and the Grace of God be Upon You!

Allow me Mr. President to thank you in my capacity as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and on behalf of the Palestinian people, for inviting us to this international conference. This conference symbolizes the crystallization of the entire world's will in its march towards achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in our region and in bringing long-anticipated justice to our country where oppression, wars, occupation and violence have prevailed in the previous decades.

Today, Your Excellency, you stress the need to make the most difficult choice-the choice of making peace and ending a dark era marked by hatred. It is an era for which the peoples of the region have paid a dear price with the lives of its youth, the future of subsequent generations and the prosperity, advancement and liberty of millions of us all.

Therefore, I thank you Mr. President. By calling this historic conference, you have sent a very clear and strong message to the peoples of the entire Middle East, who now watch with great hope as well as tremendous fear of losing yet another opportunity. The intent of your letter of invitation is not obscure: It expresses your personal commitment and the commitment of your great nation to attaching the highest priority to negotiations to achieve a long-awaited peace between both Palestinians and Israelis and the broader Arab world and Israel. We hope that this will be the culmination of your legacy for the world-a world more free of violence, persecution and fanaticism.

I must commend you, Your Excellency, on choosing this gorgeous city of Annapolis as the site for the conference. In addition to its beauty, Annapolis symbolizes liberty, the most exalted value of all. Freedom, for Palestinians is perhaps the most evocative word-the word that captures the collective hope of Palestinians and their aspiration for future generations. It is their sun and the light of their future. It is the last word of their martyrs and victims and the daily hymns of their prisoners.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Secretary Rice and her team. Without their persistence and perseverance-and without their ability to grasp all aspects of the conflict in our region-we would not have been able to gather here today. Secretary Rice took important strides in her quest to emphasize that the path to peace through negotiations is the only path-and that this path is irreversible.

I must also stress that the exceptionally broad participation of our brothers and sisters from Arab and Islamic countries, the Quartet, the G8 and the Permanent members of the United Nations, in addition to many European and Asian countries, as well as members from the Non-Alliance block and the African continent, in a conference unique in the conflict's history is a driving force that helps imbue the conference with added legitimacy. This broad participation also demonstrates strong support for Palestinian and Israeli negotiators to persevere in their quest to reach the Two-State solution, which is based on ending the occupation and establishing a sovereign State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel by resolving all of the permanent status issues in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the broader Arab-Israeli conflict, which will prove indispensable to forging peaceful and normal relations in the region. I am proud of this broad Arab and Muslim contribution and the broad international participation because it shows the support of sister countries for the Palestinian people and their leadership to establish peace. Such support endorses our approach, which calls for an historic and balanced settlement that will ensure peace and security for our independent state, for Israel and for the entire region.

The Arab and Islamic presence also demonstrates that the Arab Peace Initiative was never a move without a definite goal but rather a courageous strategic choice aimed at changing the nature of relations in the region and beginning anew. This historic Arab and Islamic shift and quest for a regional peace should now be a similar willingness to engage by all as it will lead to ending the occupation in all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, as well as the Golan Heights and parts of Lebanon and as it will also lead to resolving all the other permanent status issues. Chief among these is the plight of Palestinian refugees which must be addressed holistically—that is, in its political, human, and individual dimensions in accordance with UNGA resolution 194, as emphasized in the Arab Peace Initiative, and with the participation of sister Arab countries who have borne the heavy burden of hosting the refugees for decades.

It is no exaggeration to say, Your Excellency, that today marks a juncture in the history of our region—a juncture between two eras: The Pre-Annapolis era and its aftermath. In other words, the exceptional opportunity that the Arab, Islamic and international presence brings today coupled with overwhelming Palestinian and Israeli public opinion in support of Annapolis, must be seized in order to be a launching pad for a negotiations process. The possibilities offered by today's conference must not be wasted. This window of opportunity might never open again and if it does, it might never claim the same consensus or momentum.

Mr. President,

What we face today is not only the challenge of peace but also a test of the credibility of all involved: The credibility of the United States of America, members of the Quartet, the entire international community, Israel, the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority, as well as the Arab and Islamic group. It is a test that will draw deep marks in the future of the region and the relations among its peoples on the one hand and on the international forces that care about the region's peace and security on the other.

With this outlook, we come to Annapolis today. We therefore recognize the weight of responsibility upon our shoulders and the burden that we will have to bear. We recognize, and I believe that you share our opinion, that the absence of hope and the infiltration of desperation into the hearts of peoples is what feeds extremism. It is therefore our joint duty to allow for real hope to thrive. This way, we hope that with your full support and involvement we might achieve a complete transformation and that a genuine peace can be achieved soon, before the end of your term, Mr. President.

Tomorrow, we embark on a serious and comprehensive negotiations process on all the permanent status issues including Jerusalem, refugees, borders, settlements, security, and water, as well as others. We must support such negotiations with tangible and direct steps on the ground, which will be taken as proof of having embarked on an irreversible track towards a negotiated, comprehensive and full peace. Such steps must involve freezing all settlement activities including natural growth, reopening institutions in Jerusalem, removing settlement outposts, removing checkpoints, releasing prisoners and facilitating the mission of the Palestinian Authority in restoring law and order.

With all frankness and without any hesitation, I have to defend the right of my people to open their eyes to a new dawn free of occupation, settlements, apartheid walls, prisons full of prisoners, targeted assassinations, and the siege of checkpoints around villages and cities. I look forward, Your Excellency, to the day when our prisoners are free and to the day when they can assume their roles in supporting peace and building their homeland and state. It is also my duty to say that the destiny of Jerusalem is a key issue in any peace treaty we reach. We want East Jerusalem to be our capital—a capital where we will have open relations with West Jerusalem and where we will guarantee for believers of all religions the freedom to practice their rituals and to have access to the holy sites without discrimination and in accordance with international humanitarian law.

In this context, I would like to emphasize that we will continue to carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the Roadmap in fighting lawlessness, violence and terrorism and in restoring law and order. The government of the PA is working tirelessly in extremely difficult conditions to achieve this

noble cause. We do this for our own people because we must, not because it is a political requirement imposed upon us in previous accords or the Roadmap.

Our people clearly understand the difference between the threat posed by terrorism versus using terrorism as a pretext to maintain an intolerable situation. Our civil, security and economic institutions must be given the opportunity to function and this process must be sponsored by the international community until our authority and government are able to fully assume their responsibilities. I must also stress that our determination to end occupation stems from our vision that by doing so we destroy one of the most important excuses for terrorism in our region and in the world. I say this without undermining the necessity to fight terrorism regardless of time, conditions or source because it is a danger that threatens the future of all peoples and can doom civilization and destroy its accomplishments.

Here, I would like to praise Mr. Tony Blair for his distinctive and meticulous role in building Palestinian institutions and promoting major economic projects to improve the conditions of daily life and consequently prospects of peace. He is amazing in presenting creative ideas that contribute to inspire political movement and promote security. In this regard, the role of the European Union, Japan and our Arab brothers who provide ongoing support for economic projects and institution building is also highly appreciated.

Mr. President,

I want to use this opportunity to speak to every mind, heart and conscience of every Israeli citizen, based on my full recognition that without undermining the importance of international and regional backing, the determining element for making peace and sustaining it are the public opinions in Palestine and in Israel and the commitment of their legitimate leaderships.

I would like to begin by saying that in spite of our differences over some of the most difficult issues in the Conflict, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has shown a desire for peace that I felt during our bilateral meetings. This desire for peace has genuinely contributed to our reaching this important step that we inaugurate today. Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to continue working closely with you until we are able to complete this historic long-awaited mission together. It is essential that each one of us uses his weight, experience and determination to overcome the difficulties that will face us and to bridge the gaps between our two positions so that we can achieve a resolution. This is how we will end occupation and long years of suffering for our refugees; this is how we will ensure neighborly relations, economic cooperation and people-to-people relations, all of which are the strongest guarantees for a sustainable peace.

I would also like to speak to the citizens of Israel on this exceptional occasion to tell them: Our neighbors on this small piece of land, neither you nor we are begging for peace from one another. Peace is a common interest of yours and ours. Peace and freedom are our rights just as peace and security are your rights and ours.

It is time that the cycle of bloodshed, violence and occupation end. It is time to look into the future with confidence and hope. It is time for this aching land that is called the land of love and peace to live up to its name. Peace is not impossible if we have the will and the good intentions and when each side realizes its rights.

He who says that making peace between Palestinians and Israelis is impossible wants only to prolong the duration of conflict and to propel it into the abyss of the unknown. This unknown is unfortunately very known to us: it is more decades of bloodshed, after which we will not arrive to a solution different from what is offered today-the contours and the essence of which is known to each one of us. The continuation of the conflict might also lead to the death of the idea of peace in our minds, hearts and consciousness. Peace is possible. It requires, however, a common effort to achieve it and to sustain it. Today we extend our hands to you as equals and the world is our witness and support. We must not lose this opportunity that might never be repeated. Let us make the peace of the brave and guard it for the sake of both our children and yours.

To our friends all over the world: members of the Quartet, participants in this conference, and other countries and nations who are not present here today who supported us in the past and who continue to be willing to help us, I would like to tell you that our people will not forget your support under the most difficult conditions. We are looking forward to your continued political presence with us after the conference is over to ensure the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations process achieves its goals. We hope that the work of this conference will be enhanced by the success of the Paris Economic conference that will be held in a few weeks.

The continuation of the negotiations and their success is the real key to changing the face of the entire region.

The Almighty God says in the Holy Qur'an:

O Ye who believe! Come all of you into peace and follow not the footsteps of the devil. He is an open enemy for you. (Al-Baqra 208)

And if they incline to peace, incline also to it, and trust in Allah. He is the hearer, the knower. (Al-Anfal 61)

I also would like to recall what President John F. Kennedy said: "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate."

To my Palestinian people, to all Palestinians in Gaza, Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the refugee camps in the Diaspora, I would like to share these words with you: I recognize that each and every one of you has their personal pain and special tragedy stemming from this conflict and years of al-Nakbeh and bitter occupation. Do not lose confidence or hope. The entire world is extending their hands to us to help end the years of our everlasting Nakbeh. The world is trying to help us end the historic injustice that was inflicted on our two peoples. We will be ready as individuals and as a people to overcome the pain and tragedy when we reach a settlement that will give us rights that are equal to people elsewhere on this world: the rights to independence and self-determination.

And to Palestinian mothers who are awaiting the return of their jailed sons; to the children who are dreaming of a new life and a prosperous and more peaceful future; to our brave prisoners and to all of my sons and daughters wherever you are: Have faith in tomorrow and the future because an independent Palestine is coming. This is the promise of the entire world to you today. Trust that the dawn is coming.

To my people and family in the Gaza Strip: You are in my heart and the hours of darkness will vanish before your determination does and our determination to the unity of our people in the West Bank and Gaza as a unified and unbreakable geographic and political entity will overcome. Your suffering will end. Justice and peace will prevail.

Mr. President,

I would like to end with a quote from President Abraham Lincoln, which he wrote during one of the most difficult moments in American history: "Let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to do all that we may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Thank you Mr. President and Peace and blessings of God be upon you.



**ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER LIVNI TZIPI, ADDRESS TO THE ANNAPOLIS
CONFERENCE, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, 27 NOVEMBER 2007**

Madam Secretary of State of the United States, Ms. Condoleeza Rice, Mr. Abu Ala, Esteemed colleagues, and especially the representatives of the Arab world here in this room today, Ladies and gentlemen,

Sixty years ago this week, the United Nations passed a resolution to partition the strip of land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River - the place known to us as the Land of Israel and to others as Palestine. The strip of land where I was born, where my forefathers lived for thousands of years. The strip of land to which the Jewish people yearned to return when in exile, when they prayed for Jerusalem, and to which they returned over the course of hundreds of years. The strip of land where my Palestinian colleagues were born.

I did not come here today to argue about rights. I did not come here to argue whose claims are more justified. I came today to tell my colleagues from the Arab world that the right thing to do is not to relinquish our sense of justice or our belief in rights. I have no intention of asking another nation to do that, just as I do not ask that of myself - and I believe in the Jewish nation's right to all of the Land of Israel. This is the time to think about a different right - the right of our children to live in peace and mutual dignity, according to the values that I believe are the legacy of all the peoples in the region, and certainly the values of all the religions. Your important participation here, even though for some of you this was not an easy decision, testifies to that fact and instills in me hope for the future.

True, there is a national conflict between us, whose just resolution is to give expression to the national aspirations of each of the nations in its own state. This is exactly the principle determined 60 years ago, after years of bloodshed between the residents of this country - the principle of two states for two peoples: one - a Jewish state, as decreed by the UN resolution, and the other - an Arab state.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, the decision to establish the State of Israel alongside an Arab state was meant to provide a response to the past conflict; it is not what created the present conflict. The decision did not determine who was more in the right, but rather what would lead to a life of peace between the peoples.

Even before the State of Israel was established, the Jewish public accepted the principle of the partition of Israel. We chose already then not to resolve the question of rights over the Land of Israel, or the question of historical justice. We decided to embark on a new life in a new state - even if only on part of the territory.

This choice, which was rejected at that time by the Arab world, is still a choice that can be made by the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular.

On the day that the State of Israel was established, May 14, 1948, our Independence Day, the day that you, my Arab colleagues, call the "Nakba" - the disaster, Israel proclaimed in its Declaration of Independence: "We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help..."

Our hands are still outstretched in peace to the entire Arab and Muslim world without exception, including the Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Morocco and Indonesia.

I am proud at where Israel is today. I am sorry that the Arab world rejected the principle of partition in the past, and I hope and pray that today there is an understanding that instead of fighting, the right thing to do is to build a shared future in two separate states: one - the State of Israel, which was established as a Jewish state, a national home for the Jewish people; and the other - Palestine - which will be established to give a full and complete solution to Palestinians wherever they may be. Those who are in Gaza and the West Bank, and those in the refugee camps in other Arab countries with temporary status, waiting for a sense of belonging to a national state - the same feeling of wholeness that the

establishment of the State of Israel gave to the Jewish refugees who were forced to leave Arab countries and Europe and became partners in building Israel.

I believe that the solution of two nation states serves the interests of both sides. Not every celebration of ours is cause for sorrow on the other side, and vice versa. I say to my Palestinian colleagues: Do not bemoan the establishment of the State of Israel; establish your own state, rejoice in its establishment and we will rejoice with you, since for us the establishment of the Palestinian state is not our Nakba, or disaster - provided that upon its establishment the word “Nakba” be deleted from the Arabic lexicon in referring to Israel.

Knowing that the conflict has a solution is not enough. Reaching the solution depends first of all upon us - on the two sides themselves and their ability to conduct negotiations, to touch on the most sensitive points and to provide answers based on the understanding that neither side can obtain everything it wants and that compromises are necessary on both sides.

The solution also depends on the ability of the leaders to cope with extremists and terrorism, and we are not speaking here only of the leaders of the sides directly involved in the conflict. This is the central task of the entire world leadership, and especially of the Arab and Muslim world.

Alongside the fact that we have gathered here to launch the peace process - we cannot ignore reality. Gaza, which is supposed to be part of the Palestinian state, is controlled by a terrorist organization and arms continue to flow into it; Hizbullah - the long arm of Iran - prevents stability in Lebanon and persists in arming itself despite the UN resolution; Iran is threatening the entire region, and extremist entities within your own countries are being manipulated from outside by radical organizations.

This is the time for decision. Everyone must decide which side they are on, and the sides, ladies and gentlemen, have changed. They are no longer Israel on one side and the Palestinians on the other side. They are no longer the Arabs on one side and the Jews on the other side.

In one camp is everyone who is sitting here in this room - Jews, Muslims and Christians, Israelis, and Arabs, Americans, and Europeans.

You know who did not come - those who are working against the conference. The states that did not come are those that support terrorist organizations and radical elements in your home countries; those who wish to cause instability in the region. The organizations and leaders who use God's name to sow hatred, to send children out to be killed. The same God we see as the God of mercy and peace.

This is the battle that must be won.

Sitting on the fence will not accomplish it. Neither is one-time participation in an event sufficient. The common goal is comprehensive peace in the region for all the peoples and all the states. Peace is not merely an agreement in exchange for land; peace means ending incitement, ending support of terrorism and actively opposing it, ending arms smuggling, and dismantling terrorist bases of operations.

And that is the role of leadership - even if it has to cope with inflamed public opinion. Nothing is more worthy of mention in this context than the dramatic change brought about by two brave leaders 30 years ago this month, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat, who chose to influence the course of history rather than surrender to it - and the hearts of the people changed with them as well.

I have heard those who say that Israel needs to pay for normalization. Such talk is based on an approach whereby normalization is a kind of prize that should be given to Israel only after comprehensive peace is achieved between Israel and its neighbors, an approach that assumes that it is in Israel's interest to achieve normalization with the Arab world instead of a difficult peace process including compromises.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is a mistake.

I admit that Israel wants to live a life of peace and partnership and to establish normal relations with the entire Arab world. Israel's strong desire to make peace with its various neighbors does not replace the process of direct negotiation with the Palestinians, even at the cost of the compromises that will be required of us - and today we are resuming this process. The yearning, the goal and the vision that we seek to fulfill - peace with the Palestinians and with our other neighbors - this is the prize. We want to do it.

Our dream is not to stall for time, and stagnation is not our policy. It does not serve the interests of either side. We are not trying to establish facts on the ground through settlements and we are willing to pay a heavy price in terms of territory for peace. We do not want to control the Palestinians or to dictate their lives. We do not want our children, as soldiers, to stand at checkpoints and screen civilians, and we do not want your children's childhood pictures to be our children, as soldiers, putting their parents through a security check. We have no hidden agenda. Not so long ago, we decided on disengagement. We left Gaza, we dismantled settlements, we withdrew our army, we took risks with the understanding that Gaza will not be the last step.

We want to take the next steps through agreement.

It is clear to us that in order to carry out change, we will have to give up parts of Israel. Our border is the border of security. We are prepared to do so, provided that it does not endanger the lives of our citizens. That is also our obligation towards them.

Normalization is not something that you give and Israel receives; it is something from which everyone benefits.

I have heard some say that Israel should not expect a handshake, and I will not ask for one. But let us imagine what might happen if the worst possible scenario occurs and there is a handshake between an Israeli leader and an Arab leader whose country has no diplomatic relations with Israel, and that handshake is broadcast around the world.

Then the extremists in the Palestinian Authority will understand that the fact that Abu Mazen, Salam Fayyad and Abu Ala are meeting with Israelis and conducting peace talks is not a betrayal of these principles but rather a process that is supported by the Arab world.

Then the extremists in the Arab countries will understand that a new era is beginning, that the process is right and that it is being implemented in stages. Should you announce today that you will promote ties with Israel beyond a handshake, with Israel taking additional steps for the benefit of the Palestinians, those same extremists will understand that you are not helping Israel and neglecting the Palestinian channel, but rather you are helping the Palestinians and utilizing the normalization with Israel in order to help them.

And it can make things easier for us as well. When the Israeli public, which has been victimized by terrorist attacks, fails to understand how we can permit ourselves to promote a peace process in the current reality, we can say that we are changing the face of the entire region. You can help Israel to help the Palestinians.

Furthermore, by sitting on the fence and waiting for the conclusion of the peace process between Israel and its neighbors, you will miss a historic opportunity to influence the process. Influencing the process in this manner means supporting the bilateral process, strengthening the Palestinians to make the necessary decisions. Because we have no doubt that even if the Arab peace initiative presents principles based on the Arab narrative, you have no intention of replacing the Palestinians in the negotiations. Please support them; they need it. Without your support for compromises there will be no peace.

The world is watching events here in Annapolis. I was pleased with your decision to come here. The picture emerging from here is one of a vision of peace shared by those who are prepared to make the

necessary change - and it is a picture worth more than a thousand words. Your presence here is important, not just for the leaders with whom we are meeting today. Your presence is important to the entire world - it is important for you at home, it is important for the Palestinian Authority and it is important for Israel.

Today's picture is the start of the journey toward peace. Today we set out on three parallel tracks.

The first - the political track - is an ongoing bilateral dialogue between us and the Palestinians in an attempt to reach the agreements that will allow for the realization of the vision.

The second - the practical track - according to the Roadmap, requires hard and diligent work vis-à-vis the terrorist organizations wherever they are, in Gaza, in the West Bank - a battle against the leaders, a battle against incitement, a battle against their patrons, one place after another. This is a difficult task that the Palestinian Authority have begun and at the end of the political track, we will return to the practical track to check whether the conditions are ripe for the establishment of the Palestinian state.

The Roadmap is not an obstacle to the process. It is the right way to advance it, and it represents the interests of the Israelis, the Palestinians and the region. According to the Roadmap, the path to a Palestinian state passes through the war against terrorism - not as an excuse for not establishing it, but rather as a need of the entire world. We must all provide a response to the situation on the ground, particularly in Gaza, where the kidnapped Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, is still being held.

The third track that has been opened here today is the regional track. I hope and believe that your participation here today is an expression of support for the bilateral process - support for a legitimate Palestinian government, support for the moderate elements in the region and the beginning of the normalization process between you and us in stages and in accordance with the steps that Israel will take to benefit the Palestinians.

We have paid a heavy price over the years of the conflict. Families have lost their loved ones and we are powerless to soothe the pain of a bereaved mother. We cannot turn the wheel of history back, bring our dead back to life, restore the maimed to health, and return people to their homes. We cannot change decisions that we have made. There is no point in regretting decisions that we could have made in time and missed the opportunity. We can make decisions that will affect the future, and the journey to peace in the region begins once again here, today, in Annapolis.



**JAVIER SOLANA, EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY, REMARKS ON THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE,
ANNAPOLIS (USA), 27 NOVEMBER 2007**

I am very pleased to be here today. I would like to thank the efforts of President Bush and the determination of Secretary Rice, and to pay tribute to the courage of President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert in achieving this moment of hope and opportunity.

Agreement of the parties to launch final status negotiations with the aim of completing these by the end of 2008 is a remarkable achievement.

This is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. Now is the moment for all of us to step up and take our responsibilities. I have been very closely involved in previous attempts to achieve peace between Palestinians and Israel. We must learn from past disappointments. Time is not on our side.

Ultimately, it is up to the two parties to make this process work. But the sustained support and involvement of the international community will be essential in order to create the momentum to keep today's achievements on track and avoid them being blown off course by occasional crises.

Genuine efforts to reach the ultimate political objective of a settlement of the conflict cannot succeed without parallel steps to improve the situation on the ground. Progress towards peace also means urgent improvements in security, in movement and access and in the Palestinian economy.

We need to see immediate steps from both sides towards full implementation of commitments under Phase 1 of the Roadmap.

The European Union looks forward to being closely involved in all aspects of the post-Annapolis period. The EU is also ready to accompany this new momentum in a determined fashion:

- through our role in the Quartet;
- through the deployment of EU missions on the ground;
- through our position as the largest donor to the Palestinians;
- and through the constructive involvement of many of our Member States.

The EU is prepared not only to continue its involvement, but to shape it and step it up in support of a new, substantive and credible process. To this end, the EU has approved a plan designed to make the EU's role more creative, more positive and more ambitious as engagement between the parties deepens and starts to deliver results.

The EU Action Plan addresses both short-term and long-term issues. Our short-term aim is to help address security and law and order, allowing greater freedom of movement for people and goods, and leading to increased economic activity. This would be complemented by technical assistance to economic and fiscal governance and assistance to the private sector.

In the longer-term, our plan would address broader capacity building in order to support the transition from rehabilitation to post-conflict development. We are also looking at the potential EU contribution to the resolution of final status issues.

The forthcoming donors' conference in Paris is also a vital part of the next steps that will have to be taken if we want to keep up the momentum. It is crucial to the implementation of Prime Minister Fayyad's Reform and Development Plan, and also to the credibility and sustainability of the political process as a whole. The EU is committed to the success of the Paris Conference where we will be outlining our future support for the Palestinians.

We particularly welcome the decision of the Arab League countries to support this meeting and to attend at ministerial level. Through their decision to relaunch the Arab Peace Initiative and through their support for President Abbas, they have played a central role in bringing us all here today.

The Arab partners will also play a vital role in the achievement of peace between Israelis and Palestinians as a first step towards a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We look forward to staying in close touch with Arab partners in the post-Annapolis phase including through regular meetings of the Quartet with the Arab League follow-up committee.



ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT TO FORMALLY RESTART MIDEAST PEACE TALKS, US NAVAL ACADEMY, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND, 27 NOVEMBER 2007

The representatives of the government of the state of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, represented respectively by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Mahmoud Abbas, in his capacity as chairman of the PLO executive committee and president of the Palestinian Authority, have convened in Annapolis, Maryland, under the auspices of President George W. Bush of the United States of America, and with the support of the participants of this international conference having concluded the following joint understanding:

We express our determination to bring an end to bloodshed, suffering and decades of conflict between our peoples; to usher in a new era of peace, based on freedom, security, justice, dignity, respect and mutual recognition; to propagate a culture of peace and nonviolence; to confront terrorism and incitement, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis.

In furtherance of the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, we agree to immediately launch good-faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues without exception, as specified in previous agreements.

We agree to engage in vigorous, ongoing and continuous negotiations and shall make every effort to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008.

For this purpose, a steering committee led jointly by the head of the delegation of each party will meet continuously as agreed.

The steering committee will develop a joint work plan and establish and oversee the work of negotiations teams to address all issues, to be headed by one lead representative from each party. The first session of the steering committee will be held on 12 December, 2007.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert will continue to meet on a biweekly basis to follow up the negotiations in order to offer all necessary assistance for their advancement.

The parties also commit to immediately implement their respective obligations under the performance-based road map to a permanent two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict issued by the quartet on 30 April, 2003 – this is called the road map – and agree to form an American, Palestinian and Israeli mechanism led by the United States to follow up on the implementation of the road map.

The parties further commit to continue the implementation of the ongoing obligations of the road map until they reach a peace treaty. The United States will monitor and judge the fulfillment of the commitment of both sides of the road map.

Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, implementation of the future peace treaty will be subject to the implementation of the road map, as judged by the United States.



**EUROPEAN UNION COUNCIL, CONCLUSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE
PROCESS, 2840TH GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
COUNCIL MEETING, BRUSSELS, 10 DECEMBER 2007**

MIDDLE EAST

Middle East Peace Process - Council conclusions

The Council had an exchange of views with the Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, on prospects after the Annapolis meeting.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The EU welcomes the holding of the Annapolis Conference and the joint understanding reached between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas to immediately launch good-faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty before the end of 2008. This should lead to the establishment of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza

- that will unite all Palestinians, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its neighbours. It is also important that the parties implement their Road Map obligations in parallel to their negotiations. The EU welcomes the wide participation of Arab partners at the conference and calls for their continued and positive involvement.
2. The EU is determined to accompany this new momentum by supporting the parties in their negotiations in a sustained and active manner and through working closely with other members of the Quartet and partners in the region to keep the negotiations on track. As set out in the EU Action Strategy: "State-building for Peace in the Middle East" the EU stands ready to adapt and enhance its activities in support of a new, substantive and credible process. Amongst its immediate priorities the EU aims to further strengthen security and law and order. In this context, the re-engagement and expansion of EUPOL COPPS is an important element in the improvement of security. To this end, the Council expects Israel to engage constructively in providing accreditation to the mission without further delay. The EU will also further strengthen its programmes to foster institution building, good governance, civil society contributions and support for growth of the Palestinian economy working in close cooperation with the Quartet Representative. The Council welcomes the work of Tony Blair and in particular, his recent announcement of a number of quick impact projects.
 3. The Paris Donors' conference in December will be an important opportunity for the whole international community to back up its commitment to assist in the economic and financial development of a future viable Palestinian State and to provide the necessary support to the post-Annapolis process. In this context, the EU looks forward to the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan. In order to allow for the establishment of a new support mechanism the EU endorses the further extension of the TIM for three months.
 4. The Council reiterates its grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and calls for the continued provision of essential services. All parties must work urgently for the opening of the crossings in and out of Gaza for both humanitarian reasons and commercial flows. As a first step the EU welcomes the recent opening of crossing for the export of agricultural products. Such moves will support progress on the political track.
 5. The Council recalls that peace in the Middle East requires a comprehensive solution through a lasting and just settlement of the conflict in all its tracks based on the principles of land for peace, the relevant UNSC resolutions, the Road Map, and previous agreements reached between the parties. The Council emphasises again the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative as a major element in moving the Middle East Peace Process forward.



**STATEMENT BY ISRAELI ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS,
CALLING TO END THE SIEGE OF GAZA, 12 DECEMBER 2007**

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, support and uphold the call of a coalition of organizations and individuals in Gaza for an international campaign to end the siege on Gaza. We call on members of Israeli society to join the campaign.

Since June 2007, Israeli isolation policies towards the Gaza Strip have escalated. While controlling all points of exit from the Gaza Strip, the government of Israel has increasingly restricted passage of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip, leading to severe hardship and a drastic curtailment of the basic sources of sustenance and health of the population of the Gaza Strip.

All but 12 basic commodities have been blocked entry to the Gaza Strip, causing shortages in water, fuel, medications, essential equipment, raw materials and thousands of other essential commodities. In November alone, 13 patients died after Israeli authorities denied them access to medical care that is unavailable in Gaza.

Both Palestinians and Israelis have a right to live in peace and security, but the Israeli government policy of collective punishment is pushing the entire region further from security, and is morally and legally unjustifiable.

No progress can be achieved in any peace process while Gaza, still an occupied territory, is excluded from discussion and its civilian population punished. The lifting of the siege is therefore at the heart of Israeli, Palestinian and regional interests.

In November 2007, a group of Palestinian non-partisan human rights organizations and civil society leaders launched a call for a joint Palestinian-International-Israeli campaign to end the siege on Gaza.

The aims of the campaign are to call upon the Israeli government to lift the siege and stop other collective measures imposed on the civilian population of Gaza, to raise the awareness of the Israeli public and the international community to the deteriorating living conditions resulting from the siege, and to mobilize governments and communities to stop the boycott of Gaza.

The End the Siege campaign is humanitarian, non-partisan and based on the tenets of human rights and social justice. It is guided by the wish to end all forms of violence in our region.

On the Palestinian side, End the Siege is initiated and managed by “representatives of civil society, the business community, intellectuals, women activists, and advocates for human rights and peace from both the West Bank and Gaza, all expressing their commitment to peace and their respect for human dignity”. On the Israeli side, End the Siege supporters include human rights organizations and other actors in civil society. The call is open to all who wish to join it.

From the call: “We are determined to move hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder with all people who believe in freedom, human dignity and peace... . It is time to put aside any partisan conflicts and unite people in the pursuit of freedom, justice, and peace.”

Planned activities include:

- Documentation and dissemination of information on the impact of the siege: a website, posters and video clips of daily life in Gaza.
- International symposium in Gaza: “Breaking the Siege on Gaza: Together for a United Front for Peace”.
- International delegations to Gaza and Israel.
- Meetings and cultural activities in Gaza, Tel Aviv, Ramallah, and different cities in the world.
- A peaceful march to Erez Crossing from both the Israeli and Palestinian sides of the Crossing with peace activists from all over the world.
- A “Free Gaza Movement Day” in May, including a boat journey from Cyprus to Gaza.

Signed: Adalah
Anarchists Against the Wall
Bat Shalom
Bat Tsafon
Coalition of Women for Peace
Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement
Gush Shalom
Hamoked Centre for the Defense of the Individual
Hithabrut-Tarabut
New Profile
Physicians for Human Rights-Israel
Shomrei Mishpat - Rabbis for Human Rights
Ta’ayush – Arab-Jewish Partnership
The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions
The Israeli Committee for the Palestinian Prisoners and Detainees
The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel



**PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, GENERAL SECRETARIAT,
PRESS STATEMENT WARNING SYRIA AGAINST INTERFERENCE IN
PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS, 12 DECEMBER 2007**

News agencies have reported statements attributed to Mr. Farouq al-Shara, Vice President of the Syrian Arab Republic, welcoming the convening of what he called a "Palestinian national conference in Damascus."

The Palestinian leadership would like to clarify it had not asked the Syrian leadership to convene such a conference on its soil. Any unilateral endeavor of this kind will be considered a flagrant interference in Palestinian internal affairs that would adversely reflect on Syrian – Palestinian relations on the eve of the preparations for the Arab League summit in Damascus.



**ISRAELI CABINET, STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF STRENGTHENING
THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY, JERUSALEM, 16 DECEMBER 2007**

At the weekly Cabinet meeting on Sunday, 16 December 2007:

1. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made the following remarks: "The conference of donor countries will convene tomorrow in Paris and will deal in strengthening the Palestinian Authority (PA) as part of the international effort to establish its economic, civil, institutional and administrative base in order to allow it to function as a developing entity ahead of statehood, that is capable of properly running its own affairs. Of course, the main issue from the State of Israel's point-of-view in the end is the PA's ability to properly deal with the security issue, defeat the terrorist organizations and assure that there will be no terrorism directed at Israel.

Israel will participate in this meeting. Naturally, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who will present the Israeli position and participate in the discussions, will lead the Israeli delegation. We certainly support the strengthening of the PA and the appropriate international mobilization in order to bring about an improvement of the Palestinian residents' daily lives, especially by upgrading their own economic infrastructure that will not be dependent on the State of Israel once the appropriate administrative institutions are established. As I have said, this includes - first and foremost - proper law-enforcement organizations and systematic action against the terrorist organizations.

We are cooperating with the International Quartet Envoy, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair. We will continue to cooperate with him and will help him in strengthening projects on the agenda.



STATEMENT BY THE MIDDLE EAST QUARTET, PARIS, 17 DECEMBER 2007

The Quartet Principals - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner - met today in Paris to discuss the situation in the Middle East. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

The Quartet lauded the success of the November 27 Annapolis Conference, which resulted in agreement to launch bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty and demonstrated broad regional and international support for Israeli-Palestinian and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. The Quartet welcomed the commencement of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to resolve all outstanding issues, including all core issues, and looked forward to vigorous, ongoing and con-

tinuous negotiations. The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to remain closely involved and to support the parties' efforts in the period ahead as they make every effort to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008.

The Quartet reaffirmed the importance of Palestinian economic and institutional capacity building in order to lay the foundation for a viable and prosperous Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. In that regard, the Quartet expressed its strong support for the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan presented by Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Fayyad, welcomed the generous support of the international community at the Paris Donors' Conference, and urged donors to maximize the resources available to the PA. The Quartet underlined that the success of this plan depends on the cooperation of all partners: the PA, donors and Israel. In this context, it stressed the importance of improved movement and access. The Quartet commended the excellent work of the European Commission and World Bank in establishing and managing the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) since June 2006. Now, with the establishment of a responsible PA government committed to peace, the re-establishment of a functioning PA single treasury account, and in light of the excellent Palestinian Reform and Development Plan presented to donors in Paris, the Quartet urged donors to resume direct bilateral assistance to the PA. Principals endorsed a final extension of the TIM until the end of March 2008 to allow sufficient time for donors to make this transition.

Quartet Principals noted the continuing importance of improving conditions on the ground and creating an environment conducive to the realization of Israeli-Palestinian peace, and the establishment of a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security. In this regard, the Quartet expressed concern over the announcement of new housing tenders for Har Homa/Jabal abu Ghneim. Principals called for all sides to refrain from steps that undermine confidence, and underscored the importance of avoiding any actions that could prejudice the outcome of permanent status negotiations. The Quartet called on both parties to make progress on their Phase One Roadmap obligations, including an Israeli freeze on settlements, removal of unauthorized outposts, and opening of East Jerusalem institutions, and Palestinian steps to end violence, terrorism, and incitement.

The Quartet condemned the continued rocket fire from Gaza into Israel and called for an immediate cessation of such attacks.

The Quartet gave its strong support to the projects developed by Quartet Representative Blair and commended the constructive support of the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority for their implementation.

The Quartet reiterated its deep concern over the humanitarian conditions facing the population of the Gaza Strip and emphasized the importance of continued emergency and humanitarian assistance without obstruction. The Quartet called for the continued provision of essential services, including fuel and power supplies. It expressed its urgent concern over the continued closure of major crossing points given the impact on the Palestinian economy and daily life. The Quartet encouraged contacts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to consider ideas such as Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's proposal for the PA to assume responsibility for the Palestinian side of the Gaza crossings in order to improve operations and oversight for the passage of goods and people.

Recognizing the crucial role that Arab states must play in support of the peace process, and the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet commended the broad and constructive Arab participation at Annapolis and called for their political and financial support for the Palestinian Authority government and institutions. Principals looked forward to their meeting with Arab foreign ministers, to be hosted by the Portuguese Foreign Minister, which would present an opportunity to discuss the way ahead.

The Quartet agreed to meet regularly in 2008, to review progress and provide support for the parties' efforts. Envoys will meet to follow up and discuss how best to harness international support for progress towards peace.

The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on UNSCRs 242 and 338.



**US SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS AT THE
PALESTINIAN DONORS CONFERENCE, PARIS, 19 DECEMBER 2007**

I am very pleased to be here in Paris today. I would like to thank President Sarkozy for hosting this important conference, and I would like to thank the co-chairs of this event: our friends from Norway, the European Commission, and Former Prime Minister Blair, the Quartet's Special Representative. All of you have been steadfast and supportive partners of the Palestinian people. Thank you very much.

Let me also recognize the presence here of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. As I have said before, the international community is grateful to have leaders of your caliber, your experience, and your talent, representing and working on behalf of the Palestinian people.

I am also pleased that Foreign Minister Livni and her colleagues from Israel are here with us today.

We now have a real opportunity to make progress toward the goal of two democratic states living side by side in peace and security. Last month, the international community answered President Bush's call to meet in Annapolis. There, with full international support, President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert agreed to immediately implement the Roadmap. They also inaugurated negotiations on all of the core issues of the conflict. Both parties have created negotiating teams, and they are now beginning to carry out serious negotiations.

For these efforts to succeed, the continued and unwavering support of the international community is absolutely vital. That is why we are here today, and not a moment too soon. The Palestinian Authority is experiencing a serious budgetary crisis. This conference is literally the government's last hope to avoid bankruptcy.

The vitality of the Palestinian Authority and the success of the Palestinian people are in the interest of all who seek peace, and security, and a two-state solution in the Middle East. Now is the time for the international community to make good on its promises of support for these goals, and for the Palestinians who share them.

Prime Minister Fayyad has created the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan & ndash; an ambitious but realistic plan to improve life for his fellow citizens, and to lay the foundations of a successful, responsible state. This is a good and responsible plan. It balances the immediate budgetary needs of the Palestinian Authority with the reforms and development assistance needed to build a future state, and expands economic opportunities for all Palestinians.

We are here today to support the Palestinian Authority's plan with real offers of tangible assistance. So on behalf of the United States, I am proud to pledge \$555 million to support the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people in the coming year, including \$150 million in budget support. This is a significant increase in our assistance from last year, and I hope that other donors will follow suit today by providing a substantial increase from their previous support.

Our planned contribution is subject to the approval of our Congress, and it includes support for projects directly linked to the development and security sector reform efforts that are identified in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan. We also plan to continue our annual support for the UN Relief and Works Agency, because we are committed to helping meet the needs of the most vulnerable Palestinians.

We also recognize the need to support Palestinian efforts to develop private sector projects that can create jobs and hope. We appreciate and fully support Quartet Special Representative Tony Blair's efforts on this front, and we are developing a new initiative of our own.

Earlier this month, President Bush announced a partnership with the U.S. private sector to support Prime Minister's Fayyad's ambitious development agenda, and to complement Mr. Blair's work. We now have a real opportunity to spur private investment and create jobs, especially for Palestinian youth, and I encourage all of you to invite your business communities to look for ways to support the Palestinian's development and economic growth efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen: This is the most promising opportunity to seek peace that we have had in nearly seven years. And we need to seize it. We need to support both parties in their efforts to end the conflict and to make peace. Words and promises of support are helpful, but that alone is insufficient. Progress requires action, and it requires tangible financial assistance for Prime Minister Fayyad's government. I hope that we will meet that goal today.

Palestinians have waited too long for the dignity that will come with a state of their own. Israelis have waited too long for the security and for an end to the conflict that will come with a responsible, democratic neighbor. We have all waited too long for peace and security in the Middle East. And we should wait no longer. Thank you very much.



**UN SECURITY COUNCIL, PRESS STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN
THE MIDDLE EAST, URGING RAPID DISBURSEMENT OF DONORS'
PLEDGES, NEW YORK, 21 DECEMBER 2007**

The following Security Council press statement on the Middle East was read out today by Council President Marcello Spatafora (Italy):

The members of the Security Council welcome the international donors' conference for the Palestinian State held in Paris on 17 December, which has provided a strong international signal of support to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, and which constitutes an important step in a broader process aiming at the realization of the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security.

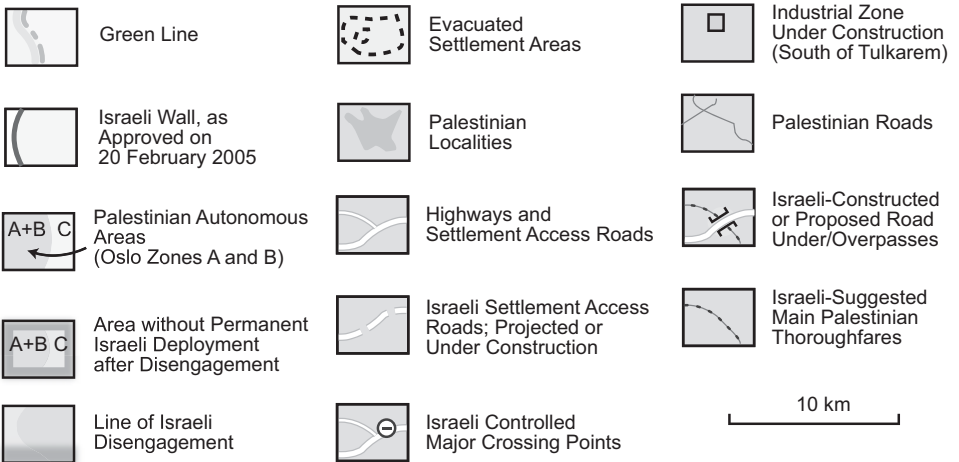
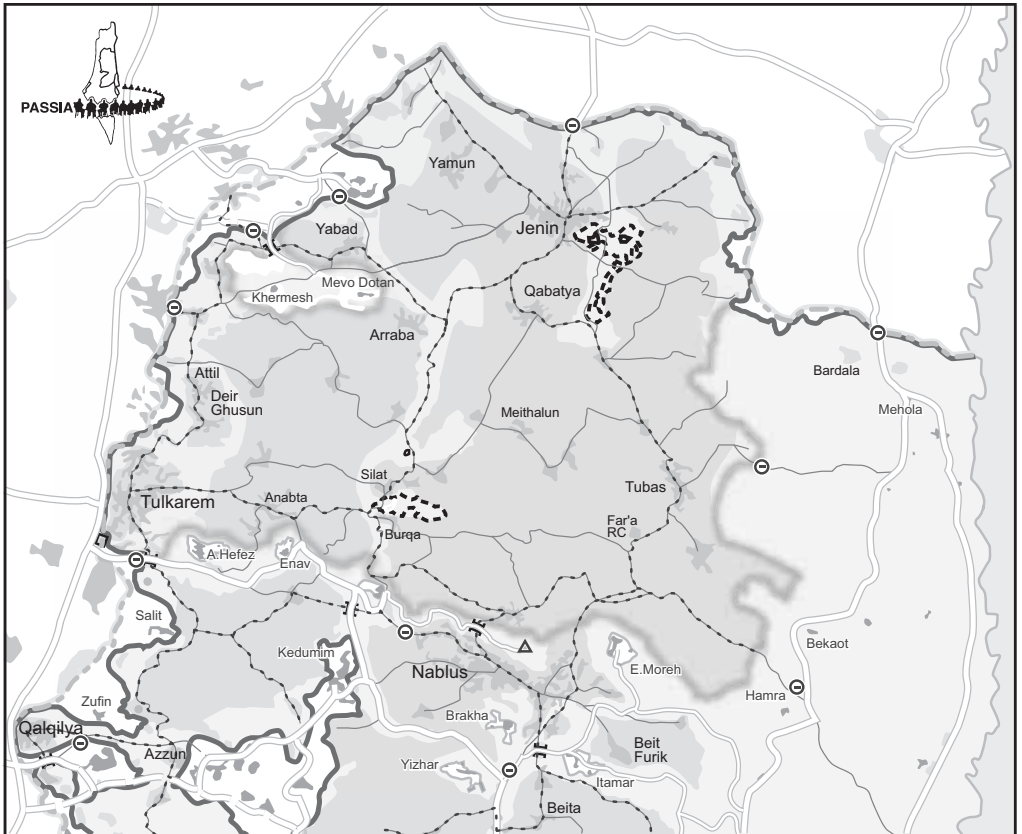
The members of the Security Council thank all participants for their pledges, urge a rapid disbursement of these pledges, based on equitable burden-sharing among all donors and call upon all those States and international organizations in a position to do so to assist in the development of the Palestinian economy, to maximize the resources available to the Palestinian Authority and to contribute to the Palestinian institution-building programme in preparation for statehood.

The members of the Security Council reaffirm their commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the other relevant Security Council resolutions.



Map 1

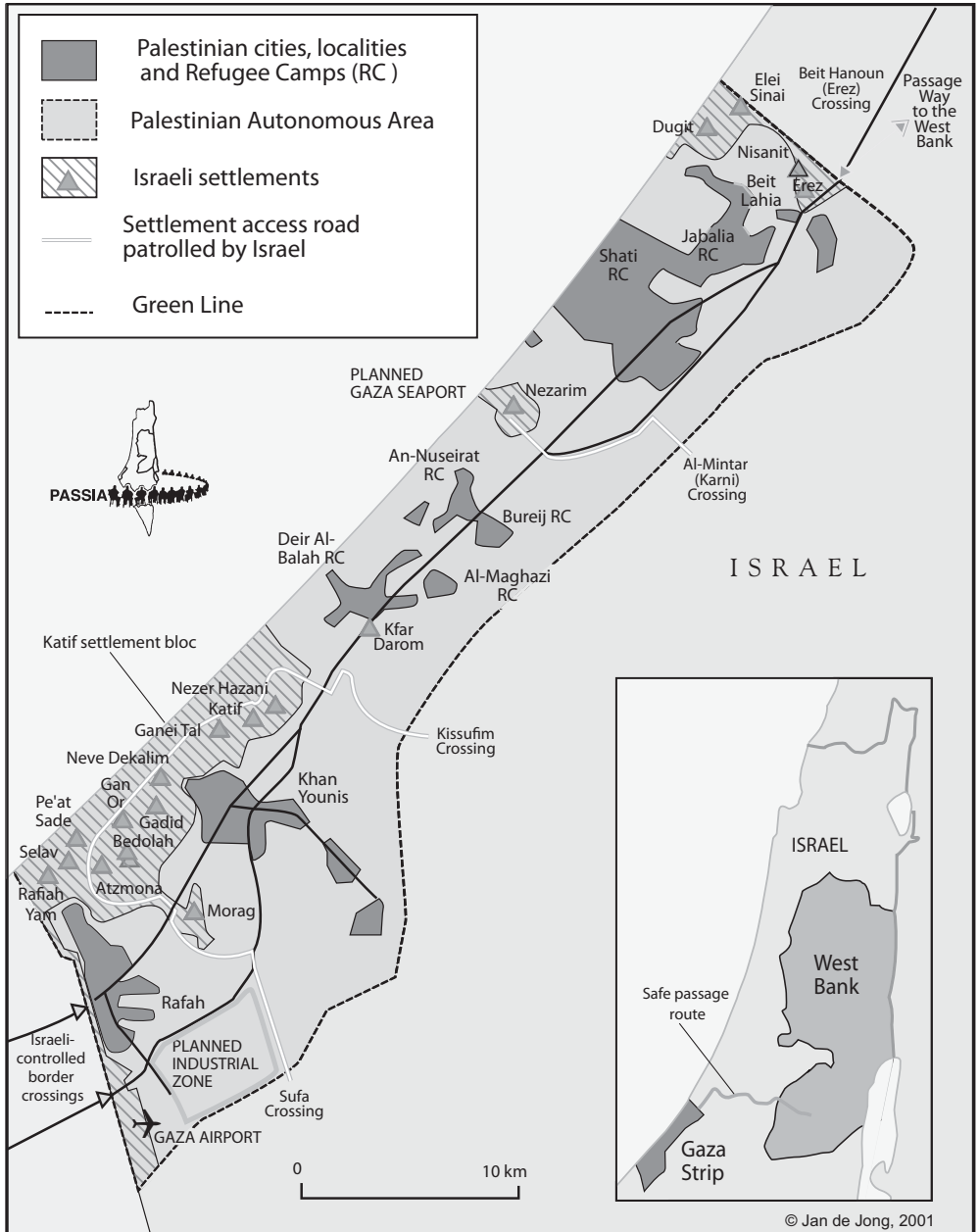
The Northern West Bank After Israeli Disengagement, 2005



Map: © Jan de Jong

Map 2

The Gaza Strip, Before Israeli Disengagement



Map 3

The Gaza Strip After Israeli Disengagement, 2005

