

Quartet Statement

New York 24/09/2009

The Quartet-U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union Javier Solana, European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt met in New York on September 24, 2009. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

Recalling the fundamental principles laid down in its statement in Trieste on June 26, 2009, the Quartet welcomes the recent meetings between U.S. President Barack Obama, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as significant steps toward the re-launching of direct, bilateral negotiations as part of a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 1850, and the Madrid principles. The Quartet reiterates that the only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an agreement that ends the occupation that began in 1967; resolves all permanent status issues as previously defined by the parties; and fulfils the aspirations of both parties for independent homelands through two states for two peoples, Israel and an independent, contiguous and viable state of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The Quartet reaffirms that Arab-Israeli peace and the establishment of a peaceful state of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza, on this basis, is in the fundamental interests of the parties, of all states in the region, and of the international community.

The Quartet shares the sense of urgency expressed by President Obama and fully supports the steps ahead as outlined in his statement to the UN General Assembly on September 22. The Quartet calls on Israel and the Palestinians to act on their previous agreements and obligations--in particular adherence to the Roadmap, irrespective of reciprocity--to create the conditions for the resumption of negotiations in the near term. The Quartet urges the government of Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth; and to refrain from provocative actions in East Jerusalem and calls on the Palestinian Authority to continue to make every effort to improve law and order, to fight violent extremism, and to end incitement.

Recalling that transformative change on the ground is integral to peace, the Quartet welcomes the Palestinian Authority's plan for constructing the institutions of the Palestinian state within 24 months as a demonstration of the PA's serious commitment to an independent state that provides opportunity, justice, and security for the Palestinian people and is a responsible neighbor to all states in the region. The Quartet notes significantly improved economic growth in the West Bank and welcomes initial ministerial contact between the Palestinian Authority and Israel on economic issues. The Quartet welcomes further steps by Israel to promote change on the ground and encourages it to re-double those efforts, in particular concerning free movement of people and goods. The Quartet calls on all states in the region and in the wider international community to match this commitment by contributing immediate, sustained, concrete, and coordinated support for the Palestinian nation building effort. It further welcomes the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee's commitment to coordinating assistance for Palestinian economic and institutional development in support of the successful conclusion of negotiations toward the two-state solution.

The Quartet stresses the urgency of a durable resolution to the Gaza crisis and calls for a solution that addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns, including an end to weapons smuggling into Gaza; promotes the re-unification of Gaza and the West Bank under the legitimate Palestinian Authority; and facilitates the opening of the crossings to allow for the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods, and persons to and from Gaza, consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 1860. The Quartet reaffirms its support for the proposed UN-led civilian reconstruction activities in Gaza. The Quartet reiterates its call for the immediate release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Recognizing the significance of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet urges regional governments to support the resumption of bilateral negotiations, enter into a structured regional dialogue on issues of common concern, and take steps toward normalization of relations across the region in the context of progress towards peace. In this regard, the Quartet commits to remain actively involved on all tracks and supports, in consultation with the parties, an international conference in Moscow in 2009. The Quartet tasks the envoys to continue to meet regularly and to formulate recommendations for Quartet action.
