



**DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS**

**UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL MEETING
IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE**

*“The two-State solution: a key prerequisite for achieving peace
and stability in the Middle East”*

Moscow, 1 and 2 July 2015

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Executive Summary

The United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace on the theme “The two-State solution: a key prerequisite for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East” was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the framework of its mandate given by General Assembly resolutions 69/20 and 69/21. The Committee welcomed recent efforts to revitalize the work of the Middle East Quartet and to reach out to regional actors. It also welcomed the French initiative for a Security Council resolution.

Experts presented a number of steps that could be taken by the Israeli Government, the Palestinian leadership, and the international community to achieve progress, remove obstacles to the two-State solution, and improve the lives of Palestinians. Speakers underlined the urgency to address the root causes of the conflict because the majority support among Palestinians and Israelis for the two-State solution was eroding. They also expressed concern because the Middle East was experiencing unprecedented turmoil, threatening international peace and security, which drew attention away from Palestine.

Speakers also agreed that the United Nations should continue to support Palestinian reconciliation. The Arab Peace Initiative represents the most comprehensive proposal to date, and it is critical that the Israeli public opinion be informed about it to increase its chances of success.

The international community has a decisive role to play in holding Israel accountable for its disregard of its duties under international law and international humanitarian law in order to prevent continued settlement expansion, the demolition of Palestinian homes and the escalation of violence.

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Moscow on 1 and 2 July 2015, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 69/20 and 69/21. The theme of the meeting was “The two-State solution: a key prerequisite for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East”.
2. The Meeting consisted of an opening session, three plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were: fostering conditions for successful political process; international efforts to achieve the two-State solution; and efforts in the United Nations: the next steps.
3. Representatives of 71 Member States of the United Nations and two non-member Observer States, two parliamentarians, three intergovernmental organizations, three United Nations bodies and five civil society organizations took part in the Meeting (annex I).
4. The summary of the Chair on the outcomes of the Meeting (annex II) was published soon after its conclusion and is available from the website of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, as are the full texts of papers of the speakers who provided a copy.¹

II. Opening session

5. The Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, **Ambassador Fodé Seck**, chaired the opening session.
6. The Representative of the Host Government (Russian Federation), **Mr. Alexander Pankin**, Director of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, delivered a message on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, **Mr. Sergey Lavrov**. Russian Federation has always been in favour of a just settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on international legal principles including the Madrid Principles, relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Minister expressed the hope that recent statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in favour of a two-State solution would be followed by practical steps. He added that the Russian Federation, a member of the Quartet, would continue to support the resumption of negotiations through bilateral and international fora such as the Quartet. He further added that the international community should ensure the creation of an independent Palestinian State, living in peace and security with Israel. He also stressed that the international community should also pay particular attention to the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Finally, he stated that the national sovereignty of the Palestinians was in the interest of the international community and peace in the region.

¹ See The Question of Palestine, www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/calendar.htm

7. A statement was delivered on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, **Mr. Ban Ki-moon**, by his representative to the Meeting, **Mr. Nickolay Mladenov**, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. In his statement, the Secretary-General stressed the urgent need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and realize the legitimate right of Palestinians to their own State, and of Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security; failing to do so may further destabilize the region. He added that he had written to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to encourage him to take concrete and credible steps, including a freeze on building and planning settlements, in order to promote the resumption of meaningful negotiations.

8. Mr. Mladenov expressed his deep concern that the Palestinian reconciliation process had made very limited progress in nearly a decade, which was hurting the people of Gaza and undermining Palestinian statehood aspirations. At the same time, he welcomed the commitment of Arab leaders to uphold the Arab Peace Initiative and encouraged the Quartet, the Arab League, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and all regional and international stakeholders to play a more active, supportive role in fostering an enduring peace.

9. The Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, **Ambassador Fodé Seck**, underlined that the Russian Federation was uniquely positioned to play a constructive role in achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace, as a strong supporter of the cause of the Palestinian people to achieve its legitimate rights, a friend of Israel, and a permanent member of the Security Council.

10. He said that the situation on the ground needed to be revisited, highlighting that the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, where over 2,100 Palestinians were killed and the homes of over 100,000 people destroyed the previous year, had barely begun. The Committee also welcomed recent efforts to revitalize the work of the Middle East Quartet and to reach out to regional actors. The Committee also welcomed the French initiative for a Security Council resolution setting clear parameters for the final status agreement. The Chair added that the Arab Peace Initiative, offering a comprehensive peace, continued to be a historic opportunity to bring peace and reconciliation to the Israeli and Palestinian peoples as well as their neighbours. He also welcomed the recent establishment of relations between the State of Palestine and the Vatican, the 136th State to recognize Palestine.

11. The State of Palestine's Minister for Foreign Affairs, **Mr. Riad Malki**, warned that since the Middle East was experiencing unprecedented turmoil, threatening international peace and security, the attention of some members of the international community may turn away from Palestine. He argued that a free and democratic State of Palestine, embodying pluralism, would be the cornerstone of peace and stability in the region.

12. Minister Malki announced that Palestine launched a new peace offensive based on three pillars: seeking a new framework for peace, based on internationally recognized terms of reference and a clear timeframe to end Israeli occupation; seeking additional State recognitions, following the recent recognition by the Vatican and Sweden; and seeking accountability by resorting to peaceful and legal means, including through the International Criminal Court, the

Conference of the High Contracting Parties of the Geneva Conventions, and the Human Rights Council.

13. **Mr. Nabil Elaraby**, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, expressed support for the French draft Security Council resolution, which would call for a two-State solution, Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory, and an implementation mechanism with a set timeframe. The Secretary-General also emphasized that the Quartet had not achieved any progress since its inception, and that an effective and serious review of its role was needed.

14. Mr. Elaraby challenged the international community and the Security Council in particular to take necessary actions to guarantee the implementation of its resolutions and oblige Israel to abide by international law. He welcomed the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement as well as the European Guidelines for the labelling of products from Israeli settlements. Finally, he argued that the international community should move from "managing" to "ending" the conflict.

15. A representative of **Egypt** recalled that the Arab Peace Initiative had been welcomed by the entire world but not implemented due to Israel's intransigence. He added that a number of steps were required, stressing the need to end unilateral measures taken by Israel such as the expansion of settlements and the Judaization of Jerusalem. He also stressed the need for Israel to accept international terms of reference of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the continued provision of support for the Palestinian Government and the end of the Gaza blockade. He urged the international community to play an active role in resolving the question of Palestine.

16. The **Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations in New York** stated that Israel's policy of settlement building and demolishing Palestinian homes should be stopped immediately. He asked how much longer Palestinians would tolerate this situation. He argued that, with the tacit support of some permanent members of the Security Council, to whom the Palestinian cause was not a priority. Israeli armed forces were encouraged to act with impunity. In view of the continuous violations of international humanitarian law by the Occupying Power, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela demanded that the perpetrators be brought to justice, adding that the recognition of Palestine as a member state of the International Criminal Court was a step in the right direction. He declared that his country supported France's plan to promote a draft Security Council resolution on the peace process. He encouraged the international community to request the Security Council to adopt a strong stance on the situation of the Palestinian people.

17. **Ms. Nomaindiya Mfeketo, Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa**, argued that Israel's security could only be guaranteed when normalcy would be restored with its neighbours; it could not be achieved under the current situation of occupation. Israel has the right to exist, as does a Palestinian State, she added. She informed that President Zuma had appointed two special envoys for the Middle East Peace Process, who had just returned from the region. According to South Africa, the priorities should be: unifying Palestinians parties to form a "solidarity front" for negotiations; lifting the blockade of the Gaza Strip; achieving a just solution for the Palestinian refugees and the full recognition of the 1967 borders; and halting the

expansion of Israeli settlements. She recommended that, to avoid further conflicts, it was necessary for the Security Council permanent members and all General Assembly members to agree to fully support a negotiated settlement without preconditions. The Security Council should live up to its responsibility to avoid sowing despair, especially among youth. Finally, she recommended that the Palestinian Rights Committee, in existence for 40 years, move away from “business as usual” to “business unusual”, adding that it should make recommendations to the General Assembly that will effectively resolve the conflict.

18. The representative of **Jordan** stressed that all independent reports warning about the despair and the difficult situation of the Palestinian people should alarm all those involved in the peace process.

19. The representative of **Indonesia** told the audience that United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East’s (UNRWA) 65-year anniversary was a reminder of the more than six decades of injustice against the Palestinian people and of the inability of the Security Council to live up to its responsibilities, as mandated by the United Nations Charter. Indonesia was open to any proposal that would further a political process, including to convene an international peace conference. He argued for strengthened efforts towards a more robust participation of the State of Palestine in the international arena, supporting the efforts of non-State actors in confronting Israel’s illegal policies including through boycotts, capitalizing on the recognition of the State of Palestine, most recently by the Vatican, and holding Israel accountable. Finally, he welcomed the report by the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict.

20. The representative of **Morocco** informed the Meeting about the role played by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which aims to preserve the legal status of al-Haram al-Sharif. Morocco also contributed to social and economic projects for the Palestinians through the Al-Quds Committee. To prevent radicalized groups from capitalizing on despair, a new dynamic for a peace process was needed based on United Nations resolutions, terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

21. The representative of **China** reaffirmed his country’s engagement for a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. China supported Palestine through humanitarian aid in building capacity.

22. The representative of **Pakistan** recalled that the conflict in Gaza in 2014 had caused the death of more than 2,200 Palestinians. The prospect of a two-State solution was diminishing “in front of our eyes”. It was high time for the Security Council to take up its responsibilities and adopt a resolution clearly establishing a timeline and parameters to end the occupation and establish a Palestinian State. An international mechanism including the participation of regional States and Security Council members to oversee the process was essential.

III. Plenary sessions

A. Plenary session I

Fostering conditions for a successful political process

23. The plenary session entitled “Fostering conditions for a successful political process” was chaired by Ambassador Maria Rubiales de Chamorro, Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations.

24. **Mr. Vitaly Naumkin**, Director of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, spoke about the conditions needed to achieve Palestinian reconciliation. He warned that the continued fragmentation of the Palestinian leadership was to the advantage of Israel. The United Nations could foster the conditions for such reconciliation. Improving the humanitarian situation in Gaza was a priority, as was lifting the blockade to ensure the delivery of supplies. The immediate priority was to overcome the confrontation between Hamas and Fatah by creating a single legitimate structure of government, as per the April 2014 agreement, and build confidence through efforts of the United Nations, the Quartet, and major regional, political and religious actors. Progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should not be subordinated to other conflicts in the Middle East, because the occupation of Palestine was being exploited by terrorists for recruitment. Organizations such as ISIS were a real threat to Israel and Palestine. Currently, ISIS did not have as their priority to directly attack Israel or Palestine, but this did not imply that it would not plan to do so in the future. Several terrorist attacks in Gaza had been claimed by terrorists in contact with ISIS. He also recalled media reports of contacts between Israel and Hamas. If this were indeed the case, then Israel was aiming to undermine Palestinian reunification under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas by making overtures to Hamas. He underlined that it was important for Hamas to pursue the path of national consolidation and prepare for general elections.

25. **Mr. Ahmed Tibi**, Member of the Israeli Knesset, alerted the audience that the current Israeli Government was the most radical in recent times. He recalled that earlier in the year, the day before the elections, Prime Minister Netanyahu had stated that he would commit himself to never allow a Palestinian State to exist during his term. Mr. Tibi believed that this commitment was being implemented as illustrated through continuous settlement activities and actions such as the allocation of prayer time to Muslims and Jews at Al-Aqsa Mosque. This Israeli Government had promoted racism and made it mainstream. The two-State idea was being slowly destroyed by the Israeli Prime Minister, and the *status quo* would lead to a situation where apartheid would become systematic, he argued. He emphasized that the occupation was costly to the Palestinian people but not to the occupier, and that States, organizations and corporations that boycotted settlements should be commended. Finally, he informed the audience that Israel had decided to demolish the homes of Bedouins in the village of Umm al-Hiran and transfer its population elsewhere to create an Israeli town in the same place, further demonstrating the Government’s apartheid policy.

26. **Mr. Nidal Foqaha**, representing the Palestinian Peace Coalition – Geneva Initiative, reassured the participants that peace between Israel and Palestine could be achieved if there were political will and commitment. However, this had been lacking in the official track of the

negotiations over the last 25 years, mainly from the Israeli side. Within the framework of the Geneva Initiative, in a few months, those involved would manage to find a solution for most if not all of the delicate issues of the conflict, including the five permanent status issues. The Geneva Accord provides detailed formulas that can be used for any future negotiations. However, a commitment from both sides and solid support from the international community are essential.

27. In any future negotiations, there should be a clear commitment to the 1967 borders, with flexibility regarding minor land swaps. There could not be any peace talks without a complete freeze of Israeli settlements. Also, it would be difficult to negotiate when 6,000 Palestinians remained in detention in Israeli jails. East Jerusalem should become the capital of the State of Palestine. However, with every new Israeli Government and every change in mediator, negotiations needed to start from the beginning, which negated any progress achieved since 1991.

28. Pending a comprehensive agreement, restrictions to freedom of movement must be lifted. The blockade of Gaza should also be lifted, and a national consensus government established. Hamas should bear responsibility for the daily lives of the people living in Gaza and offer solutions. The international community could play a supportive role in advancing negotiations towards a permanent status agreement and to achieve national consensus in Palestine. Referring to the French Initiative at the Security Council, he supported the idea of an international peace conference.

29. **Mr. Gadi Baltiansky** from the Geneva Initiative warned that the current Israeli and Palestinian leadership would not sign a permanent status agreement in the coming year. Hence, in the meanwhile, the priority should be to remove as many obstacles as possible from the road to the two-State solution, such as reallocating land from Area C to Area B under Palestinian control and evacuating a few settlements that undermine the continuity of Palestinian territory. These steps would significantly improve the lives of Palestinians and help set the stage for an agreement. He added that 15 years earlier, a more right-wing Israeli Government than the current one embarked in a peace process.

30. He further argued that President Abbas was a genuine peace partner but did not have control over Gaza. In his view, President Abbas needed to be encouraged to take genuine steps towards reconciliation with Hamas and assert his Government's institutions in Gaza. In addition, President Abbas should condemn any attack against Israeli civilians. Not doing so sends a conflicting message to the Israeli public. The Arab Peace Initiative needed to be implemented, although some of its proposals were unrealistic in the current regional context. He regretted that the Israeli Government had not reacted to this initiative and asserted that its implementation should be gradual. Certain steps must be taken even before a comprehensive peace agreement was reached.

31. Turning to the international community, he argued that it should not wait for both parties to agree on a draft text to put it forward to the Security Council. A draft text would generate debate in Israel between supporters of the two-State solution and its opponents, which would be a positive development. The international community could help at several levels: demanding a

change in the current Israeli policy on settlements; supporting Palestinian reconciliation; and setting future parameters for negotiations. Hamas should not be ignored. However, Hamas should prevent and fight terrorism as a first step.

B. Plenary session II

International efforts to achieve the two-State solution

32. The plenary session “International efforts to achieve the two-State solution” was chaired by Ambassador Wilfried Emvula, Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations.

33. **Ambassador Samir Bakr**, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said that his organization had adopted several proposals and resolutions declaring its member States’ unanimous support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the two-State solution. “Time is no longer a neutral element,” he said, noting that the passage of time enabled the occupying power to continue settlement building in the West Bank and the Judaization of Jerusalem, resulting in more hardship for the Palestinian people. The international community must push the peace process forward by all possible means, including by restructuring and adding new members to the Quartet as well as by holding an international peace conference. To resolve the deadlock, an OIC ministerial liaison team had begun working with the Quartet. The international community should do its part, boycotting Israeli settlements and their products. Responding to a question on the implementation in stages of the Arab Peace Initiative, he stated that it would be unfair for the Palestinians, who had been occupied for so long, to wait any longer. It was necessary to put pressure on Israel to fulfil its commitments. Since 1993, many Arab and Muslim States had established relations with Israel, and all OIC countries were ready to recognize Israel if it ended the occupation and the State of Palestine were established on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

34. French Senator **Mr. Gilbert Roger** informed the audience that in December 2014, both Houses of the French Parliament had adopted resolutions calling on the French Government to recognize the State of Palestine. Other recent initiatives by some European Union Member States, such as Sweden, which had recognized the State of Palestine, and the British and Spanish Parliaments, which have called for this recognition, are important political steps undertaken in Europe at a time when the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has evidently been at a standstill. The European Parliament expressed support “in principle” for the recognition of the Palestinian State. The Parliament also decided to launch an initiative called “Parliamentarians for Peace” aimed at bringing together European, Israeli and Palestinian Parliamentarians to advance the prospects of peace.

35. Mr. Roger further announced that French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius was currently working on the submission of a draft resolution to the United Nations Security Council aiming to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within 18 months. France might officially recognize the State of Palestine at the end of this period. Were the draft to be put to a vote in the United Nations Security Council, it would call to implement the principle of “two States for two peoples” based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital. The negotiations should also define a plan to ensure the security of Israel and Palestine through

effective border controls. The draft resolution would also respect the sovereignty of the demilitarized Palestinian State, including by providing for a phased and full withdrawal of the Israeli army within an agreed transition period. Regarding Palestinian refugees, the resolution would demand a fair, balanced and realistic solution based on a compensation system. As concerns Jerusalem, the draft resolution would emphasize the need to make it the future capital of both States. In the event that this draft resolution could not be submitted to the United Nations Security Council due to the United States' opposition, Mr. Fabius had proposed an international conference in Paris. These negotiations would no longer be under the sole auspices of the United States of America, as in the past, but would be monitored by the League of Arab States, the European Union and the G5 consisting of France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, and would help break the deadlock over the Palestinian issue on the basis of an all-party consensus, he argued.

36. **Ms. Galina Prozorova**, Lead Researcher at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that with the Arab Peace Initiative, the Arab world had declared with one voice its commitment to live with Israel in peace and friendship. She noted that, against a difficult backdrop in the region including Iran's nuclear programme and civil wars in Syria and Yemen, the Arab Peace Initiative had taken on greater meaning. She added that it was vital to step up collective mediation efforts and bolster the Quartet, which had been sharply criticized for being ineffective—a judgment the Quartet's Russian member had acknowledged as justified in part. The Russian Federation had suggested that the body work closely with the League of Arab States and other regional players. Proposals had also been put forth to involve China and India, she said, stressing the need to end the United States' monopoly over the peace process. According to Ms. Prozorova, international negotiators must employ the entire arsenal of moral, political, economic and humanitarian negotiating tools, as well as a boycott of Israeli settlements to curb settlement activity, end Israel's blockade and advance the peace process. Reminding Israel of its moral obligation might be an effective way to push the country's leadership towards consensus.

37. **Ms. Alla Shainskaya**, Member of the Executive Committee and Presidium of the Congress of Meretz Party (Israel), recalled her personal story of emigrating to Israel from the former Soviet Union and being shocked by the restrictions faced by Palestinians. She said that Israeli citizens lack a clear understanding of the existing peace proposals and their prospects for success. A scant 10 per cent of the Israeli public had some knowledge of the Arab Peace Initiative. Ms. Shainskaya noted that in 2004, at the initiative of King Abdullah II [of Jordan], a number of Israeli and Arab academics and peace non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had been invited to Aqaba [Jordan] to discuss the implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative, which resulted in a steering committee established to promote the initiative and its publication in Hebrew as an annex to Israeli newspapers. However, ten years later, no one remembers it. She suggested that some Arab NGOs come to Israel to speak to the Israeli public to promote the initiative. She reminded the audience that three out of four Israelis were born during the occupation and perceived it as normal. In recent opinion polls conducted both in Palestine and in Israel, long-standing findings were reiterated: a majority in both societies desired peace through a negotiated agreement based on the two-State solution and the 1967 borders, yet, consistent with previous results, each side perceived the other as an existential threat. Recent violent attacks by non-organized Palestinians were showing that people's patience and trust in the Palestinian

Authority dedicated to non-violent resistance had come to an end. She argued that the United Nations should reach out to Israel with a message of acceptance and recognition to allay the fears of the Israeli people.

38. **Mr. Alexander Vavilov**, Professor at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described the Middle East conflict as an open wound generating new and destructive wars every decade. Extremists are capitalizing on the conflict to spread their influence far beyond the region, he said. The threats to global stability have become so severe that no coalition – no matter how influential – can contain them. All countries should join forces against this new threat, putting global interests ahead of their narrow interests. He called for intensified efforts to restart the negotiating process, including through an international conference. The international community can contribute by creating the right atmosphere for the resumption of negotiations.

39. The representative of **Jordan** said that belief in peace, political will and courage to achieve peace were missing from the Israeli leadership. The representative of **Morocco** added that, without giving full responsibility to the Quartet to achieve the two-State solution, no success would be achieved.

C. Plenary session III Efforts in the United Nations: the next steps

40. The plenary session “Efforts in the United Nations: the next steps” was chaired by Ambassador Desra Percaya, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations.

41. Addressing the plenary session, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, **Mr. Nickolay Mladenov**, said that on the previous day in Cairo, he had his first engagement with Quartet envoys to look at the political situation on the ground and consider ways to restore hope. Continued settlement construction, the legalization of settlement outposts, the demolition of Palestinian homes, violence that could easily escalate, and divisions within the Palestinian factions created an unsustainable situation. People on both sides, particularly youth, were losing faith in the two-State solution. In the absence of a political process, the risks became greater, and the situation, much more dangerous. The Special Coordinator’s Office was focusing on what efforts must be made at the international level to preserve the two-State idea and prevent unilateral actions on the ground, he said. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had often publicly stated his commitment to the two-State concept. It was important for the United Nations to work with the Israeli Government to ensure that it would translate the stated commitments into concrete actions.

42. Mr. Mladenov stressed that the Israeli Government should stop its settlement activities. To support Palestinian reconciliation, efforts must focus on facilitating the return of the Palestinian Authority as the lawful governing authority in Gaza, addressing public sector salaries and elections, and implementing all reconciliation agreements. Turning to Gaza’s reconstruction efforts, as of the previous week, an agreement had been reached between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations to establish mechanisms allowing construction materials into Gaza to rebuild entirely destroyed homes. Over the course of three days, 500 requests were

filed. If donors lived up to the promises they made at the 2014 Cairo Conference for the reconstruction of Gaza, reconstruction could occur. Special Coordinator Mladenov stated that the best way to preserve the two-State solution was through a Security Council resolution. It was also time to speak clearly about the risks on the ground, which were greater for the side under occupation. The Arab Peace Initiative remained the most comprehensive proposal to this date. Egypt had stated on a number of occasions that it was willing to provide security and other guarantees to both parties if a final status agreement were implemented.

43. **Mr. Bassam Salhi**, Secretary-General of the Palestinian People's Party and Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that the real goal was to find ways to end the crisis and not continue the endless cycle of negotiations followed by a crisis. Direct bilateral talks without preconditions limited the possibility for international intervention, making Israel the stronger player that would be able to continue building settlements, and imposing other obstacles that delayed the establishment of the Palestinian State. To say "both sides lost" when talks failed or were delayed was unfair. On the contrary, Israel would gain by continuing to usurp Palestinian territory and entrenching the separation of Gaza and the West Bank in order to establish its "economic peace" project, which focuses on strengthening the economies of both areas under Israeli control—a move that would pre-empt a unified Palestinian State outright.

44. Mr. Salhi stated that the Quartet and its Road Map were initially intended to resolve the conflict through bilateral negotiations within three years, but they had yet to produce the desired results. Both the 2007 Annapolis Conference and United States Secretary of State John Kerry's 2014 initiative failed. The key was to exert pressure on Israel, which had maintained that it could not work with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas because of the lack of Palestinian unity. However, if Palestinian reconciliation did occur, Israel would say it could not work with Mr. Abbas because he would be aligned with Hamas.

45. Mr. Salhi supported the suggestion to hold an international conference in the region, possibly based on the Arab Peace Initiative. The Russian Federation could play a significant role in this process, which could lead to international monitoring, as was the case with negotiations to forge a nuclear deal with Iran. Such an arrangement could lead to true progress and to an end of Palestinian divisions, allowing for serious negotiations and the creation of a National Unity Government. He said that it was "profoundly dangerous" to claim that the international community must first deal with regional extremist groups before addressing the Palestinian people's concerns, because the issues were linked. Mr. Salhi added that apartheid was being perpetrated against the Palestinian people. He advised several steps for the future: organizing an international conference to end the occupation and oversee the negotiation process; ensuring rapprochement between the Palestinian political parties, and between the Palestinian and Israeli sides; and supporting a national unity government that would lead this process during negotiations.

46. **Mr. Makarim Wibisono**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, stressed that peace starts with respect for human rights. Earlier this year, a [report](#) by the United Nations Secretary-General noted that human rights violations were not only a symptom of the conflict, but rather, they drive it in an ever-worsening cycle of violence. Fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry, the most

current example being the 2014 Commission of Inquiry on Gaza, could play a very important role, especially in the absence of meaningful accountability at the domestic level, in objectively analyzing and investigating allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law by all sides, he argued. It was necessary to foster an environment that was politically less accepting of non-compliance with resolutions and non-cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms. The human rights perspective should also inform the political negotiations, he argued, to a much greater extent than it appeared to have done to date.

47. The international community should take the next step by insisting on Israel's cooperation with these mechanisms and recognizing that human rights must be at the heart of any discussion towards peace. Finally, he called on the international community as a whole to utilize human rights mechanisms effectively in order to create an environment where impunity was no longer tolerated and human rights were not treated as something that could be ignored for political exigencies.

48. **Mr. Omar Abdul-Monem Rifai**, Director, External Relations Department, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), said that after being exiled for 67 years, and under occupation for close to 50, Palestine refugees faced an existential crisis. Their isolation, exclusion and dispossession represented a time-bomb for the region, a denial of dignity and rights that must be addressed. Many of the 58 refugee camps where UNRWA was providing education, health and relief services were becoming increasingly engulfed in mounting security crises, with some almost completely destroyed by armed conflict. He argued that an unprecedented number of Palestine refugees were becoming extremely vulnerable politically, socio-economically and physically, and that this negative general downturn added to an environment in which extremism could easily take hold. The international community did not have the luxury of adopting a wait-and-see attitude and shelving this intractable situation. The dangers of failing to engage were much greater than constantly trying to achieve a breakthrough in this impasse.

IV. Closing session

49. In his closing remarks, **Ambassador Riyad Mansour**, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, lauded South Africa, a powerful moral force in the fight against apartheid, for sending its Deputy Foreign Minister to the Meeting, and recalled the 1997 statement of former President Nelson Mandela: "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." Ambassador Mansour applauded the French initiative in the Security Council - a significant break from the traditional practice of waiting for the United States to dictate the terms of resolutions on the two-State solution. Palestinian and other Arab authorities had set up a special ministerial committee to work with the French Government to facilitate the text's adoption, he said, expressing hope that the United States would support it.

50. Palestinians officials were discussing a "Plan B" with their French and other counterparts supporting the draft in the event that the Council did not adopt it, he said. The Palestinians were ready for a serious conference with other Arab countries and permanent members of the Security

Council in order to accomplish the two-State solution. However, if neither of the two plans came to fruition and both were obstructed, no one should blame the Palestinians for using all the legal tools in the international arena to achieve the two-State solution. He called on Western European countries that had not recognized the State of Palestine to do so, following the lead of Sweden and the Holy See.

51. The **Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Fodé Seck**, said that a fruitful exchange of views had taken place over the previous two days. The large participation by the diplomatic community in Moscow and the keen interest by the Russian Federation and international media were proof of the high priority that the international community attached to the issue. The discussions should serve as a wake-up call, he said, stressing that the region was at a historic crossroads. Achieving a just solution to the question of Palestine in a region marred by conflict and increasing instability was of utmost priority. He called on the Meeting's participants to keep their focus on the strategic goal: the end of the Israeli occupation; the emergence of a sovereign and independent State of Palestine with the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and the return of the Palestinian refugees.

Annex I

Summary of the Chair

1. The **United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace** was convened under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). The Meeting aimed to mobilize support for a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine. It explored ways to foster the conditions for a successful political process and reviewed international efforts to achieve the two-State solution, including those made within the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Middle East Quartet, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other multilateral organizations, as well as within the context of the United Nations.
2. Invited to the Meeting were all United Nations Members and Observers, inter-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and the media. Seventy-one Member States of the United Nations, two non-member Observer States, and three regional organizations participated. Speakers included internationally renowned experts on the question of Palestine, Palestinian members of Government, Parliament and civil society, as well as Israeli members of the Knesset, political parties and civil society. The Meeting was open to the public and the media.
3. In his message to the Meeting at the opening session, the **Secretary-General of the United Nations** emphasized that Israel's nearly half-a-century-long occupation must end and failure to do so could further destabilize the region. The Secretary-General welcomed recent statements by the Prime Minister of Israel in support of the two-State solution, and said that he had written the Prime Minister to encourage concrete, credible steps to jumpstart meaningful negotiations, including a freeze on illegal settlement building and planning. Politicians on all sides should refrain from provocative actions and should build on existing agreements, including relevant Security Council resolutions, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative, to advance a final status agreement. He added that the Palestinian Government should be fully empowered to assume responsibility for Gaza's governance and security, including control of the Gaza Strip border crossings. He also expressed concern over recent rocket attacks on Israel by Palestinian militants in Gaza.
4. On behalf of the **Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Alexander Pankin**, Director of the Department of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that his Government would do its part in international fora, particularly the Quartet, to reach a just and comprehensive settlement in line with all relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as the Arab Peace Initiative. The Russian Federation was concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for an end to Israel's blockade of the coastal strip, stressing the important role of donor countries in financing reconstruction.
5. **Ambassador Fodé Seck, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**, noted that last year's breakdown of negotiations had culminated in one of the deadliest wars in Gaza. Amidst an almost complete blockade,

reconstruction had barely begun and would take years. Settlement construction, land confiscation, housing demolitions and violence were ongoing in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Israeli Government's statements before the last elections in March of this year had raised questions over its commitment to the two-State solution. Still, there was a new international awareness that the situation could not continue. The Committee welcomed recent efforts to rescue the two-State solution, notably by the European Union, the League of Arab States' follow-up committee of foreign ministers, and France's initiative for a Security Council resolution calling for a final status agreement.

6. **The Foreign Minister of the State of Palestine, Mr. Riad Malki**, recalled that the 1993 Oslo Accords signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were to have led to a comprehensive peace agreement by May 1999, and European States had committed to recognize the State of Palestine. However, Israel continued to violate international law: the devastating consequences of the 2014 conflict in Gaza, the forcible transfer of Palestinians and the growth of settlements undermined any peace prospect. He warned against attempts to transform a political conflict into a religious one. Palestine was seeking a "new framework for peace" with clear terms of reference, a timetable for a final status agreement, the end of the occupation, and an international monitoring mechanism to ensure implementation and accountability. He welcomed France's initiative for a Security Council resolution. In parallel, the State of Palestine was seeking accountability through the International Criminal Court, the Human Rights Council, and the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions.

7. The **Secretary-General of the League of Arab States** was alarmed at Prime Minister Netanyahu's statement that the two-State solution was "behind" him. The Security Council must take necessary measures to implement existing resolutions. He also called for supporting the French draft Security Council resolution, which would call for a two-State solution, Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory, and an implementation mechanism with a set timeframe. The Quartet had to be reviewed because it had not accomplished its objectives. Resorting to the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court were useful options.

8. In the ensuing sessions, participants emphasized the need for serious negotiations based on the "land for peace" principle. As long as Israel continued to occupy Palestinian territory, the Middle East would never achieve the peace desired. The parties must refrain from unilateral measures undermining the peace process. Diplomacy must support peace until the Palestinians are given the security, dignity and independent State they deserve, and until they play their rightful role in the Middle East. A one-State reality would be disastrous for the Palestinians and the wider region.

9. There were calls for inclusive negotiations with all political parties with the international community's full support, and for Palestinian parties and factions to form a collective front for negotiations. Statements emphasized that "on-again, off-again negotiations" had not produced concrete results.

10. There was consensus on the need to overhaul the peace process initiated in 1991 in order to transform it into a meaningful process with clear terms of reference and with monitoring of compliance carried out by the international community. To ensure the success of the peace process, achievements of previous negotiations must be built on. Much had been accomplished, and a range of legal and diplomatic tools were in place and must be implemented. Most importantly, the parties must not attack each other, but instead, make efforts to reach a compromise on the most burning, seemingly insurmountable, problems.

11. Future negotiations must focus on borders and security for both sides, the establishment of East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, a just settlement for Palestinian refugees and water rights. Participants also reaffirmed the principle of accountability and that perpetrators of crimes must be brought to justice. The recent publication of the [report](#) of the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict was welcomed; Palestinians were encouraged to use it in international courts to demand that Israel be held accountable for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

12. Reconstruction of Gaza and affirmation of the Palestinian Governments' control over the enclave were urgent, as was reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. Israel's move to conduct indirect talks with Hamas was perceived as intended to undermine Palestinian unity. United Nations efforts in working with the Israeli and the Palestinian Governments to ensure delivery of much-needed construction materials into Gaza were encouraging. Gaza's reconstruction must not be followed by another conflict, and the Israeli blockade should be lifted. Ideas proposed included the establishment of an international inspection and monitoring mechanism as a way to facilitate the lifting of the naval blockade.

13. Israel's occupation would continue as long as it was not "expensive" for the occupier. There must also be a complete settlement freeze in all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the gradual release of the 6,000 Palestinian prisoners currently in Israeli jails. There were also calls to stop the Judaization of Jerusalem. *Faits accomplis* would only lead to a feeling of injustice among Palestinians. Israel's continued occupation of Palestine was exploited by terrorist groups – notably the so-called Islamic State – to recruit more youth: if there was no progress in advancing the peace process, the extremists' influence over Gaza and the radicalization of the enclave's youth would only grow.

14. Participants from Israeli civil society recalled that while the administration of Yitzak Shamir during the 1980s was considered "more extreme" than the current Israeli Government, it had nonetheless entered into a peace process with the Palestinians. But the Palestinian Government's lack of control over Gaza gave an excuse to the Israeli Government to claim that they had "no partner for peace". Prime Minister Netanyahu's concept of two States, which involved Israeli soldiers stationed within the Palestinian State, was a non-starter.

15. Concrete steps to advance the two-State solution before a final agreement was reached could include a gradual redeployment of Israeli troops, measures to foster Palestinian State institutions, and the development of the Palestinian economy, including easing restrictions on Palestinian projects planned for Area C, which comprised 60 per cent of the occupied Palestinian territory. One suggestion flagged included transferring some land in Area C, currently under

Israeli control, to Area B under Palestinian control. This transfer could include the removal of some Israeli settlements that most seriously harmed Palestinian livelihoods. In addition, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas should publicly condemn Palestinian attacks against Israeli civilians, because not doing so only deepened Israelis' doubts concerning his commitment to peace.

16. One Israeli speaker said that Hamas' end to terrorist attacks should be Israel's main condition for negotiations, but Hamas' formal recognition of the State of Israel and its compliance with the PLO's agreements could wait until a later date. Defeatist attitudes toward the peace process should not be allowed to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It was important to generate positive self-fulfilling prophecies —not just negative ones.

17. With the Arab Peace Initiative, the Arab world had declared with one voice its commitment to live with Israel in peace. Against a difficult backdrop in the region, including concerns over Iran's nuclear programme and civil wars in Syria and Yemen, the initiative had taken on greater meaning. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) had, since its founding in 1969, adopted several proposals and annual resolutions stating its Member States' unanimous support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the two-State solution. The peace initiative launched in Fez, Morocco in 1982 by the League of Arab States had been an important milestone, because it was the first time that recognition of Israel was proposed and that Arab States declared their acceptance of an independent State of Palestine along the 1967 borders. The fourth Islamic Summit Conference in 1984 had endorsed that initiative, and OIC members pledged to employ all means to implement it.

18. According to Israeli participants, there is little or no understanding of the Arab Peace Initiative among Israelis. Seventy-five per cent of Israelis were born after 1967 and considered the occupation as "normal". While they lived in freedom and democracy, millions of Palestinians were subjected to all forms of harassment and restrictions on their movement and voting rights. At the same time, each side perceived the other as a threat to its very existence. A new commitment by both sides was essential because the one-State solution was not feasible.

19. The Israeli Government had made security its top priority, but its actions were in fact endangering Israel. The Government was building barriers and destroying all advances in the peace process. The Israeli electorate voted for hawkish governments in part due to fear of being exposed to the dangers of total international isolation. A prominent Arab leader could visit Israel as a gesture to promote the aims of the Arab Peace Initiative.

20. The plight of Arabs living inside Israel was harsh, because they struggled against Israeli policies that exclude their rights in the economic, social and political spheres. Recent decisions to forcibly transfer Bedouin communities were another example of the Israeli Government's policies of exclusion.

21. Experts called for expanding the Middle East Quartet, implementing the Arab Peace Initiative and fostering greater awareness of it in Israel. The Quartet in its present form was deemed no longer adequate to address current realities. There were suggestions that the Quartet

work closely with representatives of the League of Arab States and other regional players, as well as China and India.

22. There were calls for France to “officially recognize the State of Palestine”. In December 2014, the French Senate adopted a resolution calling on the French Government to do so. Soon after, the French National Assembly adopted a similar draft. The French Parliament’s resolutions were a first step toward creating an equal relationship between Israel and Palestine, and making the latter’s recognition a prerequisite for genuine negotiations. France’s initiative for a Security Council resolution should not wait until the draft had the support of both parties before presenting it to the Council. If the resolution is not adopted in the Security Council, an international conference should be organized in Paris, establishing a framework to oversee negotiations and set a deadline for negotiations, under the supervision of the League of Arab States, the European Union and the Group of Five (G5) comprising Germany, the United States, France, Japan and the United Kingdom.

23. In his closing remarks, the **Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine** reminded Member States of their responsibility under the General Assembly’s 1948 Partition Plan and said that Palestine needed everyone’s help to complete the pending part of the plan – the establishment of an independent State of Palestine. He applauded the French initiative in the Security Council and informed that the Palestinian and other Arab Governments had set up a special ministerial committee to work with the French Government to facilitate the adoption of the text. Palestinians were also ready for a conference in order to accomplish the same objective. But if neither plan came to fruition, the Palestinians would resort to other peaceful tools to achieve the two-State solution. Palestine would also resort to the Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court to seek justice for the victims in Gaza and the continued settlement building, both of which were war crimes. It was just a matter of time before Israel and the United States accepted the existence of Palestine as a State.

24. The **Committee Chair** acknowledged the fruitful exchange during the Meeting. The large and diverse participation and keen interest of the Russian Federation and international media were proof of the high priority that the international community attached to the issue. Achieving a just solution to the question of Palestine in a region marred by conflict and increasing instability was of utmost priority. He called on the Meeting’s participants to keep the focus on the strategic goal: the end of the Israeli occupation; the emergence of a sovereign and independent State of Palestine with the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and the return of the Palestinian refugees.

Annex II

List of participants

Speakers

H.E. Mr. Samir Bakr	Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine Affairs Organization of Islamic Cooperation Jeddah
Mr. Gadi Baltiansky	Director-General Geneva Initiative – Israel Tel Aviv
Mr. Nidal Foqaha	Director-General Palestinian Peace Coalition – Geneva Initiative Ramallah
Mr. Nickolay Mladenov	United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Jerusalem
Mr. Vitaly Naumkin	Director Institute of Oriental Studies Moscow
Ms. Galina Prozorova	Leading Researcher Centre for Eurasian Studies, Diplomatic Academy Moscow
Mr. Omar Rifai	Director, External Relations Department Representative of the Commissioner-General United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East Amman
Mr. Gilbert Roger	Senator, Socialist Party of France Vice-President, Foreign Affairs Committee President, France-Palestine Friendship Group Paris
Mr. Bassam A.O. Salhi	Secretary-General, Palestinian People's Party Member, Palestinian Legislative Council Ramallah

Ms. Alla Shainskaya	Member, Executive Committee and Presidium of the Congress of Meretz Party Tel Aviv
Mr. Ahmad Tibi	Member of the Knesset, Joint List Head of the Arab Movement for Change Jerusalem
Mr. Alexander Vavilov	Professor, Department of Diplomatic and Consular Service Diplomatic Academy Moscow
Mr. Makarim Wibisono	United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Jakarta

**Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

H.E. Mr. Fodé Seck	Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Chair of the Committee
H.E. Mr. Zahir Tanin	Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations Vice-Chair of the Committee
H.E. Mr. Desra Percaya	Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations Vice-Chair of the Committee
H.E. Mr. Wilfried I. Emvula	Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations Vice-Chair of the Committee
H.E. Ms. Maria Rubiales de Chamorro	Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations Vice-Chair of the Committee
H.E. Mr. Christopher Grima	Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations Rapporteur of the Committee
H.E. Mr. Riyad Mansour	Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

Representative of the Secretary-General

Mr. Nickolay Mladenov	United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Jerusalem
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 Mr. Ruben Gutierrez, Second Secretary
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 Mr. Andrew Maringa, Minister Plenipotentiary
 Mr. Mirriam Mwareya, Counsellor
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**Non-member States having received a standing invitation to participate as observers
 in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining
 permanent observer missions at Headquarters**

Holy See H. E. Mons. Ivan Jurkovic, Apostolic Nuncio in the Russian Federation
 Mr. Ivan Lupandin, Member of the Delegation
 Moscow

State of Palestine H.E. Mr. Riad Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine
 H.E. Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
 to the United Nations, New York
 H.E. Mr. Nofal Abdel Hafiz, Ambassador
 Mr. Khaled M. M. Miari, Minister Plenipotentiary
 Mr. Ahmed Mousleh Mohamed Saleh, Head of Media Department
 Mr. Ahmad Khazaal, Counsellor
 Mr. Shamseddin Badran, First Secretary
 Mr. Kamal H.H. Abu Aisha, First Secretary
 Embassy in Moscow

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European Union Ms. Galija Agisheva, First Secretary
 EU Delegation to the Russian Federation
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 H.E. Mr. Ali Erfan, Ambassador, Head of Secretary-General's Office
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 H.E. Mr. Jalal Al-Mashta, Ambassador
 Mr. Ahmed Magari, First Secretary

Mr. Muhammad Almuallum, Attaché
 Mr. Raed Jaber, Press Secretary
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 Mr. Murad Bakri, Public Information Officer
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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East Mr. Omar Rifai, Director, External Relations Department
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Leading Specialist, AK Transneft

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