

**High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of  
the Question of Palestine and the Implementation  
of the Two-State Solution**

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*New York, 30 July 2025*

**MR. PRESIDENT**

Bulgaria highly appreciates the holding of this important international conference, co-chaired by France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Achieving lasting peace and stability in the Middle East is our shared priority, one that can only be realized through joint and coordinated efforts.

Back in 1988, Bulgaria was among the first countries to recognize the State of Palestine. This historic decision stands as a testament to our longstanding commitment to a just and comprehensive peace, grounded in the two-state solution.

Today, we gather not merely to exchange views on policy, but to reaffirm a fundamental principle—one that speaks to the dignity of peoples, the urgency of justice, and the moral responsibility of the international community. That principle is the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace, security, and self-determination—side by side in two sovereign and viable states.

The two-state solution is not a rhetorical ideal. It is a vision anchored in decades of international consensus, enshrined in United Nations resolutions, embodied in the Oslo Accords, and held by millions who refuse to yield to despair. It remains the only viable path toward a durable peace—one that guarantees a secure and democratic Israel, and a free, sovereign, and democratic Palestine.

Bulgaria strongly condemns the brutal terrorist attack carried out by Hamas on 7 October 2023, which resulted in the horrific loss of more than 1200 innocent civilian lives. The tragic developments in the Middle East since 7 October 2023 underscore the urgent need for peace. As is often the case, civilians bear the heaviest burden of conflict.

The immediate priority must be an enduring ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and a dramatic improvement in the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. This must include unimpeded access for humanitarian aid and its sustained distribution across the Strip, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2735, as well as the protection of humanitarian workers on the ground.

These goals require not only political will but also the design and implementation of practical and viable solutions.

For peace to be sustainable, it must emerge from direct negotiations between the parties, who must be willing to compromise, demonstrate leadership, and take courageous steps forward.

A fundamental prerequisite for lasting peace is trust. Confidence-building measures aiming at reducing tensions, enhancing communication, and promoting dialogue must be prioritized during any potential peace process. In this context, the exchange of information on security-related matters and the exercise of restraint are critical. Israel has a proven record of such cooperation, including with the Palestinian Authority.

Any future regional security architecture must take into account Israel's legitimate security concerns and be rooted in the recognition of its right to exist—an imperative that should be universally accepted. Neighboring

Arab states should be actively involved in this effort, ideally through normalization of relations, following the model of the Abraham Accords.

At the same time, the State of Palestine, represented by the Palestinian Authority, must be recognized by the international community, excluding any role for Hamas. This requires successful intra-Palestinian reconciliation, leading to the establishment of a unified leadership elected through inclusive democratic elections. These elections would not only resolve questions of legitimacy but would also lay the foundation for a functional and democratic Palestinian state. In this regard, capacity-building remains essential.

Particular attention must be given to working with the youth—creating pathways to peace and development while countering radicalization and incitement to violence.

Let history remember this moment not as yet another missed opportunity, but as the beginning of renewed international commitment. Let this conference not only express solidarity but serve as a catalyst for action. For peace is not a gift we offer one another—it is a responsibility we owe to future generations.

Thank you.