

International Conference for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution

28-30 July 2025

Co-chairs,

I wish to commend your efforts in organising this Conference in a challenging context.

It has provoked consideration, not just regarding the direction in which this intolerable situation is developing; but also of what a sustainable outcome would look like. This is a conversation and an opportunity for a broader reflection.

Excellencies,

The urgent need for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East has brought us here. We have witnessed harrowing inhumanities for almost a century, calling time and again for a sustainable solution to be found for the sake of all involved parties. We have been consistent in upholding the Two-State Solution as the only feasible, just, and sustainable path, towards lasting peace in the Middle

East. There is now a real risk that the prospect of a Two-State Solution could slip away.

Last year, the International Court of Justice outlined the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination as a peremptory norm of international law. Its Advisory Opinion lends moral credence to the Palestinian cause, and - particularly in today's context - it should guide us.

Like many others in this Chamber, Malta has consistently supported this inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This means that, as responsible actors, we have a duty to work to translate the concept of a Two-State Solution, from theory into practice.

It is for this reason that the Government of Malta has taken the principled decision to formally recognise the State of Palestine at the upcoming UN General Assembly; in September.

This decision reflects Malta's commitment to international law, justice, and the right of peoples to self-determination. We believe that recognition is not merely symbolic — it is a concrete step towards the realisation of a just and lasting peace. Such concrete steps are necessary, if we are to live up to the

spirit of what we advocate. It is also clear that the only way of achieving a sovereign, autonomous Palestinian State, in control of its own fixed borders is through negotiation. In particular, we believe that this will require not only political willingness to negotiate from both sides; but the existence of a legitimate Palestinian government entrusted with a popular mandate.

Excellencies,

Current issues must also be addressed with alacrity.

Palestinians must immediately be given access to food, electricity, fuel, and medical supplies, and other key assistance, if we are to prevent even more lives needlessly being lost. In this respect, Malta welcomes the increase in aid entering Gaza over the last days, and we hope that the humanitarian aid which we ourselves have dispatched, with the help of the Government of Cyprus and UNOPS; will soon make its way through the Amalthea Maritime Corridor and reach Gaza. The Palestinians, particularly children, are suffering greatly. They have fallen and are falling victim to starvation and ill health. This must stop!

An immediate and durable ceasefire; the unconditional release of all hostages; and unimpeded humanitarian access into Gaza; will be vital for any peacebuilding process to succeed.

A fully functioning state reflecting the aspirations of the Palestinian people should not be merely a geographic and political expression; it should serve to bring about the social and economic emancipation of the Palestinians.

Malta has given particular attention to the plight of children in armed conflict and has welcomed several injured Palestinian children to Malta for medical treatment, together with their family members. We shall continue to welcome Palestinian children in Malta, and to serve as a voice for those who do not have a voice.

Over the longer term, the people of Gaza need hope, governance, and reconstruction. To this end, Malta reiterates its support for the staged approach at the centre of the Gaza Recovery, Reconstruction and Development Plan; and despite limited resources we are committed to provide funding for this process. Like many others, we also believe that Hamas should not form part of the equation in Gaza's future governance.

We must also address the desperate situation faced by Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Settler violence is causing enormous damage to security in the West Bank, and we must unreservedly condemn such violence. We are witnessing an alarming acceleration in the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem—an expansion that not only

violates international law, but also gravely undermines the prospects for a just and lasting peace. Tackling settlements in this region and their expansion is critical to the viability of a Palestinian State.

Excellencies,

This conference has demonstrated our common realization that platitudes and rhetoric will not get us any closer to peace. Rather, what is needed, is a roadmap of concrete actions which will ensure the continued viability of the Two-State Solution.

My government is committed to taking three specific actions towards this goal:

- 1) Malta will continue to lend its political support, including in multilateral fora, to all initiatives aimed at promoting peace; an end to the violence and settlement construction in the West Bank; the resumption of full-scale UNRWA operations in the Occupied Territories; and accountability for violations of international law that have occurred during the war. We will undertake this effort in close collaboration with our European and international partners.

2) Malta has established a Gaza Solidarity Fund as the channel through which it will increase its financial and non-financial assistance to Palestine. This will include assistance to improve access to health and education for the Palestinian people and support for reconstruction projects in Gaza. As part of this initiative, Malta is also sending 250 tons of flour as humanitarian aid to Gaza. The flour will be transported to Gaza through the Amalthea Maritime Corridor with the assistance of the Government of Cyprus and the UN Office for Project Services (UN OPS), and distributed in Gaza by World Central Kitchen. We urge the Israeli Government to expedite all necessary approvals for this maritime humanitarian corridor to function at its full capacity.

3) Finally,

We have always been led to believe that there can be no peace without justice. Peoples deserve to be free from fear and want, wherever they may be. It is out of this yearning for peace and freedom that we urge the international community to continue to advocate for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, together with the release of the remaining Israeli hostages; victims of the brutal attacks on 7th October.

If we truly desire a long-lasting peace for the peoples of Israel and Palestine, we should remain steadfast in our support for this peace

process with the clear aim of achieving two states living side-by-side in peace, security and prosperity.

It is with this realisation that the Maltese Government is committed to recognize the State of Palestine during the UN General Assembly, in September.

This is our resolve:

To achieve peace and progress, in a region that has long suffered the devastation of conflict.