

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

Statement by Sweden

[Mr President, Secretary General, Co-Chairs, Excellencies,]

I am here today to reaffirm Sweden's commitment to peace, justice, and a two-state solution. The ongoing war, beginning with the horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas, has led to a level of suffering in Gaza that is hard to imagine. It is in the interest of all states to not only bring the current war to an end, but to ensure a sustainable two-state solution. I would therefore like to express Sweden's appreciation to France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for this conference.

Sweden has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on international law and mutual recognition. We stand firm in our support of both states' right to freedom and security. Sweden recognised the state of Palestine in 2014.

Our longstanding commitment to peace in the Middle East dates back to 1948 and the efforts of the Swedish UN mediator Folke Bernadotte, who advocated for a peaceful and sustainable resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and emphasised the importance of humanitarian efforts during wartime. This commitment lives on to this day.

This conflict cannot – must not - continue indefinitely. The two-state solution requires bold leadership and difficult compromises by both Israel and Palestine. Both parties must come to the negotiating table with a genuine commitment to peace. And the international community must be ready to support.

Let me share a few specific examples of how my government provides concrete support to a two-state solution. Sweden remains the largest contributor to the EU police mission to Palestine and continues to support the EU border mission, key to capacity-building in the security sector and to promoting rule of law. We have a well-established cooperation between our Central Bank and its Palestinian and Israeli counterparts. And Sweden has provided over 100 million USD in humanitarian support since the start of the war in Gaza, in addition to our long-term development cooperation in Palestine and our substantial core support to the UN agencies active there.

We must also hold accountable those who undermine peace through violence or unilateral actions. Any steps towards territorial or demographic changes are unacceptable. Sweden calls for EU sanctions against extremist Israeli ministers who promote illegal settlement policies and counteract a future two-state solution.

It is completely indefensible to block the distribution of humanitarian aid to civilians in need. Sweden demands that the Israeli government act immediately to alleviate the devastating human suffering and allow unrestricted and sustained humanitarian access to all parts of Gaza, at scale

and in line with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. It is totally unacceptable that children are now starving to death in Gaza, while the aid workers who are there to help are being attacked. Let us not forget that starvation of civilians as a method of warfare constitutes a war crime. And we demand, again and again, that Hamas immediately and unconditionally release the hostages. We also firmly reiterate that Hamas cannot have a role in the future governance of Gaza.

Let me be clear: the path to peace is neither quick nor easy. But it is a path necessary taking, through irreversible steps. Today marks a new chapter of intensified efforts. We call on all parties to return to the negotiating table with courage, respect for international law, and a commitment to the dignity and human rights of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Sweden stands ready to support meaningful dialogue, to uphold the principles of justice, and to work with our partners in the international community to turn hope into reality.

Thank you.