



Press Release

UN report: Thirty Years since the Oslo Accords, the Legacy of Palestinian Statehood is at Risk

The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict and end the occupation

Monday, 18 September 2023, Jerusalem – A newly published United Nations report sets forth immediate steps and a way forward towards reversing the dangerous deterioration of the situation on the ground, the fragility of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and insufficient engagement between the parties.

As we mark the 30-year anniversary of the Oslo Accords, it is incumbent upon Israeli and Palestinian leaders, and members of the international community who have supported the Oslo process and the Palestinian state-building agenda over the last decades, to take stock and reflect on the road travelled since Oslo and where we are now.

Key ‘permanent status’ issues in the Oslo Accords remain unresolved and prospects for a negotiated solution remain elusive. The Palestinian state-building project, which has rallied members of the AHLC around a common objective and for which significant political and financial capital has been invested over three decades, faces significant challenge by developments on the ground and from the stalled peace process.

This report, issued by UNSCO for the upcoming meeting of the AHLC in New York on 20 September 2023, notes that the escalating violence and attacks in the occupied West Bank and Israel, recurrent escalations in the Gaza Strip and ongoing unilateral steps, are contributing to a downward spiral on the ground that requires an urgent and collective response. Unprecedented settlement advancement, Israeli access and movement restrictions, including restrictions on land use by Palestinians in Area C, and the persistent Palestinian divide are deepening the fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and, alongside the shrinking fiscal space for the PA to meet the needs of Palestinians, are further undermining efforts to restore a political horizon. “Declining budget support to the PA and the funding and liquidity crises facing UN humanitarian

programmes, such as UNRWA and the World Food Programme, are additional destabilizing factors”, the report adds.

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland outlined a number of immediate steps that if implemented by both parties, with support from regional and international partners, can reverse the current negative trajectory. These include:

- Serious political talks, supported by the international community, should begin to address key territorial and security issues, including those related to settlements and settler violence;
- Restoring mechanisms that facilitate more regular and sustained contacts between both sides to address key issues, including economy;
- A coordinated package of short-term investments to (i) restore access to basic services in education, health, and social support; (ii) create employment opportunities for youth and women; (iii) repair basic infrastructure; and (iv) to strengthen the fiscal stability of the PA;
- Greater strategic coordination among the international community and with the PA to prioritize, coordinate and deliver such assistance;
- Near-term bridge financing to the PA for a timebound and transitional period, not only to sustain and preserve the investments in Palestinian state-building, but to facilitate the implementation of reforms that are critical to improving the PA’s fiscal stability.

UN Special Coordinator Wennesland noted that the urgency of the moment calls for immediate renewed commitment and stepped-up action by both sides and the international community. “Collectively and with better coordination there must be both immediate, short-term stopgap measures and greater attention to addressing the fundamental political issues that would preserve the internationally agreed parameters and unlock a return to meaningful negotiations”, he added.

The report reiterates that thirty years since Oslo, the overarching goal of the United Nations remains supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict and end the occupation.

Note to Editors: *The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) serves as the principal policy-level coordination mechanism for development assistance to the OPT. The AHLC is chaired by Norway and co-sponsored by the EU and the US. In addition, the United Nations participates together with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The AHLC seeks to promote dialogue between donors, the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel.*