

## **Statement by the Quartet's Principals**

**New York, 23 September 2016**

Representatives of the Quartet — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, United States Secretary of State John Kerry and European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Federica Mogherini — met in New York on 23 September.

The Quartet Principals were joined by the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and France during the second part of the meeting to brief on their work to support Middle East peace. All agreed on the importance of close and continuing coordination of all efforts to achieve the common goal of the two-state solution.

The Quartet reiterated its call on the parties to implement the recommendations of the Quartet Report of 1 July 2016, and create the conditions for the resumption of meaningful negotiations that will end the occupation that began in 1967 and resolve all final status issues.

The Quartet recalled its findings from the Quartet Report and expressed concern about recent actions on the ground that run counter to its recommendations. In particular:

-The Quartet emphasized its strong opposition to ongoing settlement activity, which is an obstacle to peace, and expressed its grave concern that the acceleration of settlement construction and expansion in Area C and East Jerusalem, including the retroactive “legalization” of existing units, and the continued high rate of demolitions of Palestinian structures, are steadily eroding the viability of the two-state solution.

-The Quartet expressed serious concern for the continuing dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, exacerbated by the closures of the crossings as well as for the illicit arms build-up and activity by militant Palestinian groups, including rockets fired towards Israel, which increase the risk of renewed conflict. In addition, advancing Palestinian national unity on the basis of the PLO platform and Quartet principles remains a priority.

-The Quartet condemned the recent resurgence of violence and called on all sides to take all necessary steps to de-escalate tensions by exercising restraint, preventing incitement, refraining from provocative actions and rhetoric, and protecting the lives and property of all civilians.

The Quartet stressed the growing urgency of taking affirmative steps to reverse these trends in order to prevent entrenching a one-state reality of perpetual occupation and conflict that is incompatible with realizing the national aspirations of both peoples.

The Quartet acknowledged certain practical steps and agreements by Israel and the Palestinian Authority that could improve conditions for the Palestinian people, while stressing the importance of full and timely implementation. The Quartet also noted the

importance of a political horizon and reiterated its call for significant policy shifts consistent with the transition to greater Palestinian civil authority contemplated by prior agreements and called for in the Quartet Report.

The Quartet underlined its commitment to achieving a negotiated, comprehensive, just and enduring resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The Quartet expressed appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator. It directed the Quartet Envoys to continue engaging with the parties and key stakeholders and to keep the Principals apprised on implementation of the Report's recommendations.

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