

STATEMENT BY MIDDLE EAST QUARTET

The following statement by the Middle East Quartet (United Nations, Russian Federation, United States, European Union) was issued on 27 September:

Representatives of the Quartet — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, United States Secretary of State John Kerry, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union Catherine Ashton — met in New York on 27 September. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair and by Israeli chief negotiator Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat.

Secretary of State Kerry updated the Quartet on the progress in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations since the resumption of talks on 29 July 2013. The Quartet received a joint briefing on the negotiations by the Israeli and Palestinian chief negotiators, and expressed appreciation to them for their efforts. The Quartet reaffirmed its determination to lend effective support to the efforts of the parties and their shared commitment to reach a permanent status agreement within the agreed goal of nine months. In this regard, the Quartet recalled its previous statements and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and reaffirmed its determination to actively support the pursuit of a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The Quartet commended the leadership of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and their commitment to remaining engaged in sustained and continuous negotiations to address all of the core issues. The Quartet called on all parties to take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to the success of the negotiating process and to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudice final status issues.

Representative Blair also provided a briefing on the Quartet's Economic Initiative to bring transformative economic growth to the Palestinian economy. The Quartet expressed its support for the Initiative and for the important mission of Palestinian institution-building that will complement, support and run in parallel with the renewed negotiations. It applauded the commitments made by the international community at the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting of 25 September to provide further support to the Palestinian economy.

The Quartet reviewed the situation in Gaza and underscored the importance of addressing the humanitarian situation and including Gaza in the efforts to support the Palestinian economy. The Quartet discussed the humanitarian needs of Gaza's residents and emphasized the importance of increased access into Gaza through legal crossings, welcoming recent steps taken by Israel in this regard and urges the parties to maintain the ceasefire reached on 21 November 2012.

The Quartet noted the importance of both sides demonstrating a commitment to improving the atmosphere for the negotiations, including through positive messages by the leaders.

The Quartet also discussed the importance of international support for the negotiations and commended the Arab League for its constructive role and recognized that many others in the international community have made important contributions. The Quartet expressed hope that such efforts will continue.

The Quartet agreed to continue meeting regularly, including through monthly meetings of Quartet envoys who will report on progress on the ground and work towards initiatives to support the parties in building a climate for peace. The envoys will remain in constant communication to provide maximum support for ongoing negotiations.

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