

**03 March 2025**

## **Secretary-General's message on the launch of the Berlin Initiative: for a Diplomatic Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

I commend the launch of The Berlin Initiative and its commitment to a diplomatic resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since the horrific terror attacks by Hamas on October 7, the ensuing Israeli military operations have unleashed an unprecedented level of death and destruction in Gaza. Meanwhile, the deteriorating situation in the West Bank is fueling further instability and suffering.

The ceasefire in Gaza must hold and be implemented in full. All hostages must be released immediately, unconditionally, and in a dignified manner. And humanitarian aid must be maintained, funded, protected, and reach people in dire need without restrictions.

But beyond ending this terrible war, we must lay the foundations for lasting peace – one that ensures security for Israel, dignity and self-determination for the Palestinian people, and stability for the entire region.

That requires a clear political framework for Gaza's recovery and reconstruction. It requires immediate and irreversible steps towards a two-State solution – with Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, unified under a legitimate Palestinian authority, accepted and supported by the Palestinian people. And it requires putting an end to occupation, settlement expansion and threats of annexation.

Efforts like The Berlin Initiative help forge a diplomatic path. I urge everyone to seize this moment to build a future where Israel and Palestine live side by side, in peace and security, in line with international law and UN resolutions. It is the only way.

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