

Statement by the Middle East Quartet in Munich

The Quartet -- United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, United States Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell, and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union Catherine Ashton -- met in Munich on 05 February 2011. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

The Quartet took note of dramatic developments in Egypt and elsewhere in the region in recent days. The Quartet members considered the implications of these events for Arab-Israeli peace and agreed to discuss this further in upcoming meetings as a matter of high priority.

The Quartet reiterated its statements related to the Middle East, and in particular to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It strongly urged the parties on that basis to overcome current obstacles in the peace process.

The Quartet reaffirmed that negotiations should lead to an outcome that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and resolves all permanent status issues, in order to end the conflict and achieve a two-state solution. The Quartet reiterates its support for concluding these negotiations by September 2011. The Quartet agreed to meet again at the level of Principals in mid-March on the way ahead. In advance, and as a matter of priority, it will seek via its envoys to meet separately with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Brussels, as well as with representatives of the Arab Peace Initiative Committee. In its discussions with the parties, the Quartet is giving serious consideration to their views on how to bring about resumed negotiations on all core issues, including borders and security.

The Quartet commended President Abbas' leadership of the Palestinian Authority, and continued Palestinian statebuilding efforts. It welcomed the package of measures announced by Prime Minister Netanyahu and Quartet Representative Blair for both the West Bank and Gaza and encourages full implementation and additional steps.

The Quartet regrets the discontinuation of Israel's ten month moratorium on settlement activity and strongly reaffirms that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community.

The Quartet condemned rocket fire from Gaza and stressed the need for calm and security for both peoples.

In view of the developments in the Middle East, the Quartet expressed its belief that further delay in the resumption of negotiations is detrimental to prospects for regional peace and security. The Quartet emphasized the need for the parties and others concerned to undertake urgently the efforts to expedite Israeli-Palestinian and comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, which is imperative to avoiding outcomes detrimental to the region.