

# Canada

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**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE JOHN BAIRD  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CANADA**

**NEW YORK, 29 NOVEMBER 2012**

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**DÉCLARATION DE L'HONORABLE JOHN BAIRD  
MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES DU CANADA**

**NEW YORK, LE 29 NOVEMBRE 2012**

Mr. President,

Canada opposes this resolution in the strongest terms because it undermines the core foundations of a decades-long commitment by the international community and the parties themselves to a two-state solution, arrived at through direct negotiations.

While we understand a final resolution remains elusive, Canada has long opposed unilateral actions by either side as these are unhelpful. The outstanding issues are too intricate and too complex to be resolved by symbolic, unilateral measures.

We do not believe that unilateral measures taken by one side can be justified by accusations of unilateralism directed at the other. That approach can only result in the steady erosion and collapse of the very foundations of a process which—while incomplete—holds the only realistic chance to bring about two peaceful, prosperous states living side-by-side as neighbours.

Canada's support for a negotiated settlement, like our opposition to the initiative before us today, is rooted in the very history of this venerable organization and in the sustained international effort to resolve this matter.

Canada was proud to be one of the countries preparing the blueprint for peace as part of the 1947 UN Special Committee on Palestine. That committee came up with a proposal for a two-state solution—one predominantly Jewish and the other predominantly Arab living side by side—which ultimately resulted, in November 1947, in the passage of UN General Assembly Resolution 181 setting out the Partition Plan. However, not all of those who should have supported this vision were prepared to do so, and the people of the region have suffered for seven decades as a result.

Even in those early, difficult days, however, the principle of collaboration between the two parties was seen as an inherent necessity, as reflected in the elaboration of a plan for economic union between the two sides. While Resolution 181 has never been fully implemented, this principle—the idea that the two parties need to work together to achieve their mutual and intertwined destinies and potential—has survived as an essential ingredient in successive efforts to find an elusive peace.

In 1948, UN Resolution 194 set up a Conciliation Commission aimed at finding solutions to the full range of problems facing the two sides. It established an important principle in calling for the parties involved to seek agreement, through negotiations, "with a view to the final settlement of all questions outstanding between them."

In 1967, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242. The Council requested the dispatch of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the region to "promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement," entrenching further the principle that solutions required the acceptance and collective action of both sides.

This idea was reaffirmed in 1973 in UN Security Council Resolution 338, which decided that "immediately and concurrently with the ceasefire, negotiations shall start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace."



These two resolutions—242 and 338—form the explicitly recognized cornerstone of all the subsequent peace commitments, accords and understandings that followed between the two parties, enshrining the need for negotiations as a core principle.

Both the Israelis and the Palestinians reaffirmed their acceptance of the principles and obligations laid out in both resolutions in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Accords. Article I made the point explicitly in highlighting that the "interim arrangements are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338."

In 1995, Oslo II built on those important foundations. In the preamble, both sides reaffirmed "their desire to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process." Article 31, under Final Clauses (section 7), stipulated that "Neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and Gaza pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations."

These principles were, again, reaffirmed in 2002. UN Security Council Resolution 1397 called on "the Israeli and Palestinian sides and their leaders to cooperate in the implementation of the Tenet work plan and Mitchell Report recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement." It also offered support to the Secretary-General and others in their efforts to "resume the peace process."

The following year, 2003, the Middle East Quartet was established. It developed the Roadmap, which was a performance-based, goal-driven plan covering peace, security and humanitarian areas. Its approach and directions were based explicitly on the principles contained in UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1397. A key element of the Quartet Principles contained in the Roadmap was the requirement that "a clear, unambiguous acceptance by both parties of the goal of a negotiated settlement" was needed to reach the destination. It goes on to underscore that "a settlement, negotiated between the parties, will result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors." The Quartet Roadmap requires, by its very nature, a collaborative effort explicitly requiring "reciprocal steps" by the two sides.

Later that year, UN Security Council Resolution 1515 formally "endorsed the Quartet Roadmap, while calling on the parties to "fulfil their obligations under the Roadmap in cooperation with the Quartet and to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security."

Resolution 1850, passed in 2008, underscored the Council's explicit support for the negotiations undertaken in Annapolis in 2007, including "its commitment to the irreversibility of the bilateral negotiations." The Resolution reaffirmed international support for the Quartet Principles and the determination of both parties to "reach their goal of concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, without exception." It also called on both sides to "refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations."



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Mr. President, successive UN Security Council resolutions and various international commitments and understandings over nearly seven decades have formed the building blocks of a collaborative peace process that remains unfinished. The path to peace has historically rested in direct negotiations between the two parties to resolve all outstanding issues and it remains the same today. Solutions can only come through the two sides working together.

This resolution will not advance the cause of peace or spur a return to negotiations. Will the Palestinian people be better off as a result? No. On the contrary, this unilateral step will harden positions and raise unrealistic expectations while doing nothing to improve the lives of the Palestinian people.

Canada is committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East whereby two states live side-by-side in peace and security.

Any two-state solution must be negotiated and mutually agreed upon by both sides.

Any unilateral action, from either side, outside of the bilateral framework outlined above is ultimately unhelpful.

Canada has long supported efforts to bring the two sides to the bargaining table to resolve all outstanding issues, and we remain committed to that objective.

But we cannot support an initiative that we are firmly convinced will undermine the objective of reaching a comprehensive, lasting and just settlement for both sides.

It is for these reasons that Canada is voting against this resolution. As a result of this body's utterly regrettable decision to abandon policy and principle, we will be considering all available next steps.

We call on both sides to return to the negotiating table without preconditions. Canada will be there to offer its good offices and support.

Thank you.