



New York, 13 November 2015

Excellency,

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the European Union wishes to convey the following message.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this message.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two state solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign, and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. The EU reaffirms that there is no alternative to a negotiated two state solution. The regional context, including the ongoing radicalisation and spread of terrorism, makes it even more urgent to end the conflict. The status-quo is not an option, as the viability of the two-state solution is constantly being eroded by new facts on the ground. The EU will actively support the parties to restore confidence and create an environment of trust necessary to engage in meaningful negotiations as soon as possible.

The EU reaffirms its belief that clear parameters defining the basis for negotiations are key elements for a successful outcome of negotiations. A comprehensive peace agreement can be reached on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative. The EU also believes that its position on parameters, as set out in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of July 2014, provides a basis for achieving consensus on the way forward. The European Union recalls the applicability of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians.

The EU is extremely concerned that, more than one year after the tragic hostilities of summer 2014, the humanitarian and socio-economic situation in Gaza remains dire and the root causes of the conflict unaddressed. Addressing this situation must be an immediate priority for the parties and for the international community.

The EU continues to call for a fundamental change of the political, security and economic situation in the Gaza Strip, including the end of the closure and a full opening of the crossing points, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. Rocket fire by militant groups is unacceptable and underlines again the danger of escalation. All stakeholders must commit to non-violence and peace. Furthermore, intra-Palestinian reconciliation is an important element not only for reaching the two-state solution, but also to improve the

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* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

situation in Gaza. Palestinian factions must make reconciliation and the return of the PA to Gaza a top priority. The PA must take greater responsibility in this regard and assume its government functions in the Gaza Strip, including in the field of security, civil administration and through its presence at the Gaza crossing points.

The European Union is extremely concerned by the recent escalation in violence and tensions in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory. We condemn any violence against civilians and all acts of terror - they are simply unacceptable and they can never be justified. We insist that all perpetrators of crimes or of acts of terror, against the Israelis as well as against the Palestinians, must be brought to justice. Both Israeli and Palestinian people have the right to live in peace and security.

The preservation of the viability of the two-state solution is at the core of EU policy and will remain a priority. In this regard, and recalling that settlements are illegal under international law, the EU reiterates its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context, such as building the separation barrier beyond the 1967 line, demolitions and confiscation - including of EU funded projects - evictions, forced transfers including of Bedouins, illegal outposts, settler violence and restrictions of movement and access. These actions seriously threaten the two-state solution. Settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both states. The EU will continue to closely monitor developments on the ground and their broader implications and remains ready to take further action in order to protect the viability of the two-state solution. The EU and its Member States reaffirm their commitment to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing EU legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products. The EU expresses its commitment to ensure that - in line with international law - all agreements between the State of Israel and the EU must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

In addition to the strong support of the European Union for a negotiated political solution of the conflict, the EU and its Member States also show their solidarity with the Palestinian People in a number of other ways.

The EU is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority and a crucial political and economic partner of all parties in the region and wants to stress the importance of burden sharing between all current and potential donors. The EU wishes to stress the crucial importance of the continuation of the Palestinian State building process, which the EU will continue to actively support.

The European Union and its Member States also show solidarity with the Palestinian People through their support of the activities of UNRWA and remain UNRWA's largest, most predictable and reliable donor. In 2014 the EU and its Member States contributed almost half of all donors' support to UNRWA's General Fund and about 33% of all contributions to the Agency's overall 1.1 billion USD operations. In this context, the European Union encourages other donors, including first time contributors, to share the burden.

The European Union remains committed to working with the parties and welcomes ongoing efforts of the Quartet to facilitate the implementation of concrete measures on the ground, consistent with prior agreements, that would benefit Palestinians and Israelis and build a path back to final status negotiations. Securing a just and lasting peace will require an increased common international effort. The EU will work actively on a renewed multilateral approach to the peace process in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including partners in the Quartet, notably the US, in the region and the UN Security Council. The EU is also ready to engage in joint work with regional partners on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative, and welcomes ongoing efforts of the Quartet in this regard. The EU will continue to provide political and financial support towards a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and, in so doing, will continue to support the Palestinian People in the pursuit of its legitimate aspirations.



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