



United Nations
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Agenda Item 37:
Question of Palestine

Statement delivered by
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Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

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Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Croatia^{*}, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*} and Iceland[†], the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. President,

The events taking place throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa in the past months have taken on truly historic proportions which will not only shape the future of the entire region but also have repercussions far beyond the countries concerned. The fundamental changes witnessed across the Arab world have made the need for progress on the Middle East Peace Process all the more urgent. Recent events have indeed shown the necessity of heeding the legitimate aspirations of peoples in the region, including those of Palestinians for statehood, and of Israelis for security.

The European Union reiterates its appeal to the parties to resume negotiations under the terms and within the timelines indicated in the Quartet Statement of 23 September 2011. The European Union welcomes the positive statements of both parties in that regard. The European Union underlines the Quartet's crucial role in facilitating the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians and recalls its readiness to support all efforts to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. In this regard, the European Union reaffirms its clear positions with regard to parameters, principles and issues, including the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council in December 2009, December 2010, May 2011 and July 2011, as

^{*} Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[†] Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

well as the Statement delivered on behalf of the European Union at the Security Council on 21 April 2011. The European Union fully supports the Quartet's call on the parties to refrain from provocative actions and to respect the obligations of both parties under the roadmap.

Mr. President,

The European Union deplores the recent Israeli decisions to advance settlement expansion in the settlements of Gilo and Givat Hamatos, and accelerate constructions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which run counter to the Quartet's efforts. The European Union deplores steps to legalize - under Israeli law - houses in West Bank outposts. The EU reiterates that settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. All settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, should cease immediately. New construction plans should be abandoned. The European Union also calls upon both sides to avoid steps that run counter to the Quartet's efforts to restart negotiations.

The European Union welcomes the presentation of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 on Governance, Economy, Social Development and Infrastructure, and stresses the need for continued international support for the Palestinian State building process, as outlined in the Chair's summary of the 18 September 2011 meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. The European Union is deeply concerned about the recent decision by the Israeli Government to suspend the transfer of revenues to the Palestinian Authority and recalls in this regard the position of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee that clearance revenue collection by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority should be efficient, transparent and predictable.

As regards Gaza in particular, the European Union calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), the full respect of international humanitarian law and for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza including goods from the West Bank. In this context the EU calls for the full implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. The EU welcomes the measures announced by the Israeli Government as a step forward. However, more is needed. The EU calls for full implementation and complementary measures in order to achieve a fundamental change of policy that allows for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza - including through exports. The European Union has offered its assistance for achieving this objective. The EU calls for a solution addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. The EU is very concerned at the renewed exchange of fire in the Gaza Strip and the South of Israel following the firing of rockets by Islamic Jihad from Gaza into Israel. The EU wholeheartedly condemns the indiscriminate targeting of civilians wherever they are, and calls on all sides to respect the ceasefire brokered by Egypt.

Mr. President,

The European Union reiterates its readiness to contribute substantially to the comprehensive and sustainable solution which is to be found, 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.

I thank you Mr. President!