



United Nations  
Secretary-General

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**Secretary-General's remarks at French Ministerial Conference Meeting on the Middle East Peace Process [as delivered]**

Monsieur le Président, je vous remercie ainsi que le Ministre Jean-Marc Ayrault d'avoir convoqué cette importante réunion sur le processus de paix au Moyen-Orient.

Cette conférence permet de souligner que la communauté internationale est déterminée à continuer à accorder la priorité à ce dossier et à coordonner tous les efforts déployés en faveur de la paix. Je vous remercie une nouvelle fois d'avoir pris cette initiative.

Excellencies,

His Excellency Mr. Nabil El Araby of the League of Arab States,

Her Excellency Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have gathered out of deep concern over the inability to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after nearly 50 years of occupation.

We all agree that a two-state solution is the only viable option for a sustainable peace.

Yet we all can see that the two-state solution is at great risk just as Foreign Minister Ayrault said, it is threatened.

With the support of the international community, the leadership of Israel and Palestine must pull back from the brink by undertaking serious efforts to create the conditions which will enable a return to meaningful negotiations.

The obstacles to peace are clear. They include terror, violence and the incitement that fuel them; the ongoing settlement enterprise; and the lack of unity between Gaza and the West Bank.

Meaningful negotiations require leadership on both sides with the courage and legitimacy to reach an historic compromise, and the political will to implement it.

Settlement activity is illegal under international law and Israel must cease its policy of expanding settlements, legalizing outposts and demolishing Palestinian structures. These actions raise legitimate questions about its commitment to the two-state solution and to its obligations as the Occupying Power.

At the same time, the Palestinian leadership must unequivocally combat violence and incitement, including by clearly condemning all acts of terror.

It must also reunite all Palestinians under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian governing authority, in line with the PLO principles.

Both parties must ensure that their actions reflect their stated commitment to a two-state solution.

Both parties need to stand up to extremists who are committed to derailing the peace process and seeking to hijack the agenda.

Changing regional dynamics and shared security concerns provide an opportunity to revisit the Arab Peace Initiative, with its vision of a comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts.

I welcome recent encouraging statements by His Excellency, the President of Egypt Mr. al-Sisi and the Prime Minister of Israel and encourage them to seize this opportunity with concrete and timely action.

I am committed to working with my fellow members of the Middle East Quartet and with our key stakeholders, including regional countries, to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and in accordance with relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The Quartet will soon issue a report reviewing the key obstacles to realizing this long-desired goal and recommending actions which, if taken now – by both sides and by all of us – can create the conditions for a return to negotiations.

Members of the international community must exercise their collective and individual influence to help reach the common destination: they are an end to the occupation which began in 1967, and the establishment of two states for two peoples living side by side in security and mutual recognition.

In that regard, I would like to inform you that I am planning to visit Israel and the State of Palestine around the end of the month to follow-up on these discussions today and I count on their leadership.

Thank you.

Merci.