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UN and diplomatic partners stress urgent need to end Middle East conflict



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) and President Barack Obama of the United States

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The United Nations and its diplomatic partners in the search for peace in the Middle East today expressed their support for the urgent need to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, voicing their backing of the vision outlined by United States President Barack Obama yesterday.

The diplomatic Quartet of the UN, European Union, Russia and United States, which seeks a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, said in a statement that it “agrees that moving forward on the basis of territory and security provides a foundation for Israelis and Palestinians to reach a final resolution of the conflict through serious and substantive negotiations and mutual agreement on all core issues.”

The Quartet reiterated its strong appeal to the parties to the conflict to overcome the current obstacles and “resume direct bilateral negotiations without delay or preconditions.” The Quartet further recommitted itself to its previous statements and principles on the Middle East peace process.

Last night, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon welcomed Mr. Obama’s speech on the recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa, and reiterated his own support for the aspirations of the region’s people for greater freedom and dignity and a better life.

“The Secretary-General continues to call on the leaders throughout the region to reject the use of force, violence and repression, and to choose the path of comprehensive reform and inclusive dialogue,” said a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson.

Mr. Ban said he believes the people of the region had the responsibility to lead the way and pledged the full assistance of the United Nations.

On the Israel-Palestinian peace process, Mr. Ban said he believes that Mr. Obama had offered important ideas which could help the peace talks move forward, consistent with international positions and responding to the legitimate core concerns of both parties.

He encouraged Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to respond as “statesmen and peacemakers” to Mr. Obama’s speech. He expressed the hope that all sides will demonstrate a renewed determination to achieve a peace agreement that provides for two States living side-by-side in dignity, security and peace.

Yesterday, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, told the Security Council that the widespread calls for political change across North Africa and the Middle East will have an impact on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

“The Arab-Israeli conflict will not be immune to these dramatic developments. One way or another, change will come to it too. This change must be shaped to positive ends,” he said.

Mr. Serry said there is “a genuine lack of trust” between Israel and the Palestinian leadership, which has prevented the resumption of the peace talks that would lead to the two-State solution to the long-standing conflict.

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