

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York
STATEMENT BY MIDDLE EAST QUARTET

The following statement was issued today 21st of June by the Middle East Quartet

(United Nations, Russian Federation, United States, European Union):

The Quartet reaffirms that the current situation in Gaza, including the humanitarian and human rights situation of the civilian population, is unsustainable, unacceptable, and not in the interests of any of those concerned. The Quartet reiterates its call for a solution that addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns, including an end to weapons smuggling into Gaza; promotes Palestinian unity based on the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) commitments and the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under the legitimate Palestinian Authority; and ensures the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza, consistent with United Nations Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). The Quartet declares its readiness to work closely with Israel, the Palestinian Government and international donors in order to achieve sustainable economic development on the basis of the full implementation of the Agreement on Access and Movement of 2005 and in the broader perspective of the two-State solution.

Consistent with these objectives, the Quartet and the Quartet Representative have worked with Israel, as well as consulting the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and other concerned parties, to effect a fundamental change in policy in Gaza. The new policy towards Gaza just announced by the Government of Israel is a welcome development. The Quartet notes that the elaboration of further details and modalities of implementation will be important in ensuring the effectiveness of the new policy. Full and effective implementation will comprise a significant shift in strategy towards meeting the needs of Gaza's population for humanitarian and commercial goods, civilian reconstruction and infrastructure, and legitimate economic activity, as well as the security needs of Israel. The Quartet will continue to work with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and other concerned parties to ensure these arrangements are implemented as quickly as possible. The Quartet affirms that much work remains to achieve fully the solution stated above, and, in consultation with the concerned parties, it will monitor closely the implementation of the policy in all its aspects. It will actively explore additional ways to improve the situation in Gaza, encourage involvement of the Palestinian Authority at the crossings and promote greater commerce between the West Bank and Gaza.

The Quartet stresses the importance of United Nations and other international interventions, as well as the work of local non-governmental organizations, to be expanded in Gaza to meet urgent civilian needs, and calls on all parties to fully enable this work.

The Quartet recognizes that Israel has legitimate security concerns that must continue to be safeguarded, and believes efforts to maintain security while enabling movement and access for Palestinian people and goods are critical. The Quartet commits to work with Israel and the international community to prevent the illicit trafficking of arms and ammunition into Gaza. It urges all those wishing to deliver goods to do so through established channels so that their cargo can be inspected and transferred via land crossings into Gaza. The Quartet emphasizes that there is no need for unnecessary confrontations and calls on all parties to act responsibly in meeting the needs of the people of Gaza.

The Quartet also calls for an end to the deplorable detention of Gilad Shalit in advance of the fourth anniversary of his capture on 25 June; it further condemns the violation of Hamas' international obligation to provide him access by the International Committee

of the Red Cross and demands that Hamas immediately remedy the situation.

The Quartet also reiterates its support for proximity talks towards the resumption, without preconditions, of direct bilateral negotiations that resolve all final status issues as previously agreed by the parties. The Quartet believes these negotiations should lead to a settlement, negotiated between the parties within 24 months, that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.