Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1183 (1999)[1]

Situation in the Middle East:Israeli-Palestinian dimension

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, while welcoming the significant progress made in the Middle East peace-process since the early 1990s, regrets that this process is again in a deadlock.

2. It resolutely supports the October 1998 Wye River Agreement and regards it as confirming the irreversibility of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process begun in Oslo. The agreement both signals acceptance of the process by the majority of Israeli politicians as well as public opinion in Israel and is further proof of the Palestinian authorities' commitment to peace.

3. The Assembly reiterates its firm condemnation of terrorism and calls for strict compliance with the security requirements laid down in the Wye River Agreement.

4. The Assembly calls on both the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities to scrupulously respect all fundamental rights and freedoms, such as laid down in the United Nations covenants and the European Convention on Human Rights.

5. In particular, it makes a firm appeal to these authorities to refrain from any kind of torture, to start the legislative process towards abolition of the death penalty, and asks the Palestinian authorities to introduce immediately a moratorium on executions.

6. The Assembly regrets that the negotiations on permanent status have not yet begun and that, given the present political situation in Israel, there is little chance of reaching a positive outcome by 4 May 1999, the deadline set by previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

7. The Assembly calls on both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to refrain from all unilateral action that might jeopardise the peace process and strengthen the hand of the extremist forces in both camps.

8. Without calling into question the principle of setting up a viable Palestinian state, the Assembly invites the Palestinian authorities to seriously consider the advisability of declaring their state on 4 May 1999 under the present circumstances, as well as the consequences that such a declaration may have, not least for the interests of their own people.

9. Similarly, expansion of Jewish settlements on Palestinian territories critically undermines the atmosphere and confidence-building for constructive negotiations. It should therefore be discontinued.

10. The Assembly believes that the status of Jerusalem remains to be determined in the permanent status negotiations and is strongly opposed to any action which predetermines these negotiations.

11. The Assembly calls on the international community to take prompt action to help produce an agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian authorities setting a new time limit for concluding the negotiations on permanent status and to guarantee compliance with the agreement.

12. The Assembly invites European states, in particular permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and the European Union to step up their efforts to bring about such an agreement by 4 May 1999. It believes that initiatives to that end should also be encouraged by the G-8 Group.

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1. See Doc. 8347, report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Lukin. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 30 March 1999.

13. The Assembly points out that successfully overcoming the present deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations is crucial to the peace process in the region as a whole and to resumption of negotiations between Israel on the one side and Syria and Lebanon on the other. The Assembly urges the European Union and Russia, as a co-chairman of the Madrid process, to play a more active role in such negotiations.

14. The Assembly, recalling its Resolution 1156 (1998) calling for the establishment of a new United Nations fund to finance the inevitable resettlement of the Palestinian refugees, urges the international community to begin consideration of this proposal to ensure its early implementation, following the outcome of the permanent status negotiations, as an essential contribution to stability and a reduction in tension in the region.

15. The Assembly declares its willingness to strengthen co-operation with the Knesset, in particular through the Knesset observer delegation to the Assembly, and with the Palestinian Legislative Council in order to promote full observance of human rights in Israel, the West Bank and territories under the control of the Palestinian authorities and foster democracy in Palestinian society.