

Resolution 1700 (2010)¹

Final version

Situation in the Middle East

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolutions 1420 \(2005\)](#), [1452 \(2005\)](#), [1493 \(2006\)](#), [1520 \(2006\)](#) and [1550 \(2007\)](#), and reasserts its undertaking to participate, for matters in its remit, in the international community's efforts to promote and foster peace in the Middle East.
2. The Assembly stresses that the passage of time does not facilitate peace. Quite the contrary, the undue slowness of the peace process is exactly what has weakened it, causing frustration and bitterness.
3. The Assembly invites the parties not to remain prisoners of the past and to overcome any attitude of distrust, loss of confidence or recrimination, in order to embark resolutely on the course of a shared and negotiated peace.
4. The Assembly confirms that there can be no peace without resolutely and explicitly combating all forms of intimidation, violence and terrorism, particularly against civilians, and urges all parties to act accordingly.
5. It reaffirms that peace can only come from a negotiated solution shared by the parties, and certainly not from military solutions.
6. It condemns all forms of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism and anti-Israeli prejudice and all forms of incitement to violence, and enjoins all members to combat them.
7. In the same way, it also condemns anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudices and enjoins all members to combat Islamophobia.
8. The Assembly reaffirms that the right to defend oneself must never transgress the principle of proportionality, taking into account the gravity of the subjected aggression and the means of self-defence, and that the use of all weapons and technologies prohibited by international agreements is unacceptable.
9. The Assembly appreciates the way the new United States Administration immediately took action to confirm the United States' resolve to pursue a solution of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians and, in welcoming the direct personal involvement of President Obama, expresses its full support for his initiatives to foster a resumption of negotiations between the parties in the conflict.
10. It also underlines the value of the President of the United States' speech in Cairo on 4 June 2009, which sought to establish a new climate of trust between the United States and the Muslim world. It underlines that President Obama's visit to Buchenwald once again demonstrated friendship and solidarity with the Jewish people and his commitment to supporting Israel's right to exist. It also hopes that a future visit of President Obama to Israel would be warmly welcomed and of great help.
11. The Assembly again underlines that the conflict in the Middle East above all concerns two equally legitimate aspirations – Israel's right to be recognised and to exist in safety and the Palestinians' right to have an independent, viable and contiguous state – and that a stable peace cannot be achieved unless the aspirations and rights of both peoples are fulfilled.

1. *Assembly debate* on 26 January 2010 (3rd Sitting) (see [Doc. 12117](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Fassino). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 January 2010 (4th Sitting).



12. The Assembly stresses that the resolutions adopted by the United Nations, the Oslo Accords, the Washington Declaration and the Taba negotiations, the 2001 Moratinos document, the Road Map proposed by the United Nations–European Union–United States–Russia Quartet and the final declarations of the Annapolis Conference all point in the direction of a peace founded on the principle of land for peace in order to guarantee the existence of a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel.

13. The Assembly underlines that, until the Annapolis Conference, all the preliminary talks and negotiations were directed at seeking mutual solutions on four strategic points: a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, modified by possible exchanges of territory as agreed by the parties concerned; a “fair and mutual” solution for the Palestinian refugees, which would not undermine the characteristics of the State of Israel; the evacuation of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied in 1967; an agreed status of Jerusalem, taking account of the historic and religious value of the city, which both the Israelis and the Palestinians claim as their own capital. On each of these questions, convergences of positions, though not formalised, have been recorded and ought not to be jeopardised.

14. The Assembly notes that the current Israeli Government has proposed a new approach for a peaceful solution which, while acknowledging the right to a Palestinian state, at the same time demands recognition of the Jewish nature of the State of Israel.

15. The Assembly regrets that the proposals made by Prime Minister Netanyahu in his Bar Ilan speech of 14 June 2009 (for a demilitarised Palestinian state with airspace and borders under Israeli control; Jerusalem as the sole and exclusive capital of the State of Israel; the Palestinian refugees’ right of return to be exercised outside the State of Israel; the borders between Israel and the Palestinian state to be determined on the basis of the current population breakdown) deviate from the approach followed to date by the parties and the international community.

16. The Assembly points out that the issue of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories has become an increasingly acute aspect of the conflict and that the United States Administration and the international community has asked the Israeli Government to stop the settlements.

17. The Assembly appreciates the fact that on 25 November 2009 the Israeli Government agreed on a ten-month suspension of new settlements and building in the West Bank, but notes that this suspension does not include new buildings already begun or approved, public works, or construction in East Jerusalem. Nonetheless, the Assembly hopes that this partial freeze may be a first step to fostering the resumption of relations between the parties in the conflict, even though the limitations referred to are a cause for concern. The Assembly places particular emphasis on the need not to take any steps which would pre-judge the identity of that part of Jerusalem.

18. The Assembly welcomes the Israeli Government’s moves to reduce checkpoints and controls on entry to the West Bank and hopes that other steps of this kind will be taken. At the same time, it notes that most of the separation wall falls inside the West Bank and that, even if it has reduced the death toll caused by terrorist attacks, it remains a serious point of contention and represents a violation of international law. The Assembly calls upon Israel to abide by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice to reroute the wall so that it lies solely on Israeli sovereign territory, and pay reparations to Palestinians who have been affected.

19. The Assembly reaffirms its support for President Mahmoud Abbas and hopes that he will reverse his decision not to stand again for election as president.

20. The Assembly welcomes the significant economic and security improvements made in the West Bank by the Fayyad Government and urges it to continue in this direction.

21. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the Fatah Congress confirmed the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas and hopes that the new leaders elected by the Congress will keep their active commitment to a negotiated and shared peace.

22. The Assembly hopes the negotiations between President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas will lead to a positive outcome, enabling a government of national unity to be formed and an acceptable date to be agreed for the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections.

23. The Assembly strongly urges Israel and Hamas to resume negotiations for a firm and lasting truce, the reopening of the crossing-points into Gaza and an exchange of prisoners allowing the soldier Gilad Shalit and the Palestinian prisoners to return to their families.

24. In particular, the Assembly reminds the parties in the conflict that it is urgent to restart peace negotiations as soon as possible and, to this end, it encourages them to restore a climate of mutual trust, which is now almost non-existent, and accordingly asks each party to be consistent and generous in their actions in taking account of the expectations of the other party.
25. The Assembly therefore urges the Government of Israel to:
 - 25.1. confirm the goal of a peace based on the birth, alongside the State of Israel, of a Palestinian state set up on the 1967 borders modified by possible limited exchanges of territory, as agreed by the parties concerned;
 - 25.2. attain this goal through negotiation with the Palestinian National Authority, on the basis of negotiated and shared criteria and objectives;
 - 25.3. vest the Palestinian National Authority with all the powers set out in the agreements concluded to date;
 - 25.4. conduct a thorough inquiry in order to ascertain the responsibilities of Israel's military forces in human rights violations, the gratuitous and unwarranted use of force and the use of chemical weapons, as reported by Richard Goldstone;
 - 25.5. free the imprisoned Palestinian Legislative Council members and a large number of other prisoners in accordance with the Annapolis agreement;
 - 25.6. authorise no further settlements beyond the borders of the State of Israel, or the extension of existing ones, and to remove what are referred to as "illegal outposts";
 - 25.7. lift the siege of the Gaza Strip, allow humanitarian aid to enter and guarantee the lasting re-opening of access points;
 - 25.8. continue relaxing the constraints on mobility and day-to-day living for the population of the West Bank by reducing the roadblocks and easing controls at the passages into the West Bank, while keeping its sense of responsibility toward the Israeli population;
 - 25.9. fulfil its obligations under international law, including adhering to United Nations Security Council resolutions and its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and to cease with immediate effect all home demolitions in occupied territory, all confiscation of land and theft of property;
 - 25.10. ensure equal rights for the non-Jewish citizens of Israel.
26. The Assembly urges all the Palestinian forces to:
 - 26.1. recognise the authority of President Mahmoud Abbas;
 - 26.2. take definite and significant steps in the direction of the three requests made by the Quartet: to refrain from violence; to recognise the right of the State of Israel to exist; to abide by all the agreements signed by the Palestinian representatives in recent years;
 - 26.3. rapidly conclude the negotiations for the formation of a government of national unity and set a universally acceptable date for the parliamentary and presidential elections;
 - 26.4. avoid any national form of incitement to violence, in particular related to children, and any celebration of martyrdom.
27. In particular, the Assembly urges Hamas to:
 - 27.1. reject the use of terrorism and combat it explicitly, renouncing its charter (The Charter of Allah: The Platform of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), 1988);
 - 27.2. cease rocket launching and all types of aggression against Israel;
 - 27.3. free the soldier Gilad Shalit;
 - 27.4. end all illegal smuggling of weapons into the Gaza Strip and the West Bank;
 - 27.5. cease all forms of persecution of opposing factions.
28. The Assembly urges both Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation to adhere to previously signed agreements.

29. The Assembly calls on the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations to revitalise the joint action of the Quartet by extricating it from the stagnation of 2008 and adjusting its approach in line with developments.

30. The Assembly underlines the essential role which the European Union needs to play in supporting the action of the Quartet, helping the parties concerned to resume negotiations and expanding bilateral relations with the countries in the region, as well as in making the newly established Union for the Mediterranean the instrument for a policy of co-operation, progress and security.

31. The Assembly recalls the conclusions of the European Union Council of Ministers meeting on 8 December 2009, in which the European Union expressed its deep concern about the stalemate of the peace process, confirmed its profound commitment for a two-state solution, declared that it would accept the modifications to the 1967 borders only if they were agreed by both parties, underscored that the illegal settlements were an obstacle to peace and asked that they be stopped, demanded the reopening of access to the Gaza Strip, and warned against attempts to annex East Jerusalem which would jeopardise reaching an agreement between the parties for Jerusalem as a capital of both states.

32. The Assembly warmly welcomes the renewed commitment of the Arab League and its member countries to peace and regards the Arab initiative adopted in Beirut and Riyadh, recently confirmed again in Doha, as an essential contribution to a peaceful mutual arrangement.

33. It expresses its support for the Arab leaders – first and foremost President Mubarak – actively engaged in creating a climate of trust and building a peace with which all parties can identify.

34. The Assembly underlines the contribution which the Kingdom of Jordan makes to stability in the region and to efforts to achieve a shared arrangement conducive to peace.

35. The Assembly is gratified by the formation of a new Lebanese Government, after many months of negotiations between the parties, and the new relations established between Syria and Lebanon following Prime Minister Hariri's visit to Damascus; it stresses the importance of the United Nations Interim force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) contingent's peace-keeping action, welcomes the commencement of business by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and appeals to all members of Lebanese society to pursue the path of rebuilding the country's economy and institutions, strengthening its unity and overcoming the earlier divisions between opposing factions and armed groups. At the same time, the Assembly draws attention to the question of the disarmament of the militia, which exposes the country to the risk of continuous outbreaks of violence and is still unresolved, as is the question of the role of Hezbollah, the main Lebanese Islamist party.

36. The Assembly regards as decisive a positive resolution of the international dispute with Iran under the new approach suggested by President Obama, and calls upon the Iranian authorities to display the same readiness to seek an agreement which offers specific guarantees as to the exclusively civilian use of nuclear technologies, on the basis of the proposals put forward by the United Nations. To prevent these efforts being undermined, Iran must comply with international demands to suspend its nuclear enrichment and reprocessing activities, co-operate with the International Atomic Energy Agency in its investigation of open questions, and immediately cease construction of the Qom enrichment site. Both Iran and Israel should co-operate with the United Nations on nuclear issues.

37. The Assembly condemns the repression and continuous acts of violence on the part of the Iranian authorities against the peaceful demonstrators and members of the opposition, and calls for the release of those detained following the demonstrations. At the same time, the Assembly rejects the violent anti-Israeli statements made by the Iranian leaders, as well as those against western countries.

38. The Assembly welcomes the progress made in the democratic transition in Iraq and asks the international community to support all the efforts of the Iraqi authorities to further the country's development and enhance its stability, based on respect for universal values.

39. The Assembly takes note of the new, more constructive attitude shown by the Government of Syria and encourages it to stay on course.

40. The Assembly welcomes the important role played by Turkey and therefore hopes that this country's positive relations of friendship with Israel, which have recently been strained, can be restored to their previous level.

41. The Assembly stresses the major contribution that the Russian Federation can make to the region's stability, in particular by encouraging Syria and Iran to put more open policies in place.

42. The Assembly stresses how important it is to support the peace process through policies of assistance for the economic and social development of the region and accordingly commends the action of the Quartet's Envoy, Mr Tony Blair, and welcomes the financial undertakings made at the Donor Conference in Sharm El Sheikh.
43. The Geneva Initiative of December 2003, although not the expression of official institutions, is promoted by key figures of Israeli and Palestinian society, and makes a very important contribution, supplying precious details for negotiations related to the final status.
44. It stresses that full affirmation of and respect for human rights, individual freedoms and democracy in all the countries in the region are vital to a stable and lasting peace, and that the Council of Europe has an important part to play in this respect.
45. The Assembly stresses that the Council of Europe can make a useful and specific contribution to peace in the Middle East. It considers that the Committee of Ministers and the relevant sectors of the Organisation should promote:
- 45.1. technical and legal assistance for complete conformity of legislation with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5);
 - 45.2. initiatives involving interinstitutional, intercultural and interfaith dialogue.
46. The Assembly is pleased by the start of the activities of the Tripartite Forum, bringing together the Council of Europe Assembly, the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council, and urges the parties to keep up their efforts.
47. The Assembly encourages the Palestinian Legislative Council to submit its request for "Partner for democracy" status with the Assembly.
48. For its part, the Assembly is determined to continue its efforts to establish relations with the parliamentary institutions of the countries of the region and to foster contacts between them.
49. The Assembly decides to continue to follow developments in the situation in the Middle East.