



Resolution 1550 (2007)¹

Situation in the Middle East

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 1493 \(2006\)](#) on the situation in the Middle East and [Resolution 1520 \(2006\)](#) on recent developments in Lebanon in the context of the situation in the Middle East.
2. The Assembly welcomes the efforts made by the Palestinian President and Fatah leader, Mahmoud Abbas, and the new government of national unity to co-operate and bring about a halt to the escalation of violence between them by signing an agreement in Mecca on 8 February 2007, which led to the nomination of a new government of national unity on 17 March 2007.
3. While welcoming the creation of a government of national unity, which should lay the foundation for Palestinian reconciliation, the Assembly expects that both sides will strive to do their utmost to eliminate political confrontation and opt for a compromise, and channel existing tensions in order not to affect the future of this government.
4. The Assembly regrets, however, that the government of national unity has not committed itself to the requirements of the Quartet (the European Union, the United Nations, the Russian Federation and the United States), namely the recognition of Israel, commitment to the principle of non-violence and respect for previous peace accords.
5. The Assembly nevertheless sees in this government a potential new partner for dialogue in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In order to reinitiate peace negotiations between them, it is important that dialogue be established with the new government.
6. The Assembly believes that it is now urgent to reactivate the peace process and to move toward a two-state solution.
7. To that end, the Assembly welcomes the renewed commitment by the Arab League states, which met in Riyadh on 27 and 28 March 2007, to the Arab peace initiative, which was first proposed in 2002. This initiative foresees the normalisation of relations between the Arab world and Israel in exchange for the return to the 1967 borders, the inclusion of Arab East Jerusalem in a Palestinian state and the agreement on a solution to the question of Palestinian refugees.
8. The Assembly, underlining the principle of the refugees' right of return, is ready to hold a round table discussion with the participation of the Israelis and Palestinians in order to share Europe's history and knowledge on the issue of people displaced from ancestral homes as a result of historical developments.
9. The Assembly believes that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority should seize this window of opportunity which could become a real breakthrough in the move towards a global settlement between the Arab world and Israel.
10. The Assembly strongly urges all parties not to lose this unique momentum.

1. Assembly debate on 19 April 2007 (17th Sitting) (see [Doc. 11250](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Margelov). Text adopted by the Assembly on 19 April 2007 (17th Sitting).



11. In this context, the Assembly believes that the commencement of regular meetings between the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, is an encouraging sign and offers prospects for the future.
12. The Assembly welcomes the first in a series of intended bi-weekly talks between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas which took place on 15 April 2007. For the first time after six years of deadlock in the peacemaking process, the general outlines for a Palestinian state were addressed.
13. Furthermore, the Assembly can only welcome the proposal made by the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, in response to the initiative put forward at the Riyadh Summit, to invite all Arab leaders to hold direct talks with Israel in the framework of a summit on the Middle East, thereby demonstrating a constructive approach to renewed dialogue.
14. The Assembly believes that the international community, in particular the Quartet and notably the European Union, should also grasp this opportunity to contribute to the progress being made towards an Arab-Israeli peace settlement and should be actively engaged in this respect.
15. As stated in [Resolution 1520 \(2006\)](#), the Council of Europe should actively contribute to the creation of a positive climate in the region capable of fostering a political settlement. The 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in Warsaw in 2005, set out clear priorities for future action, including the promotion of democratic values and intercultural dialogue.
16. Given the presence of Israeli parliamentary observers and Palestinian parliamentarians during Parliamentary Assembly sessions, the Assembly considers itself to be particularly well-placed to pursue such a dialogue at the parliamentary level with all parties concerned in the region.
17. The Assembly recalls its proposal set forth in [Resolution 1420 \(2005\)](#) on prospects for peace in the Middle East to establish a tripartite forum allowing parliamentarians from the Knesset, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and the Parliamentary Assembly to meet on an equal footing with the right to speak and make proposals on questions of common interest. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that its Political Affairs Committee is working on the implementation of this proposal.
18. The Assembly is convinced that the tripartite forum could greatly contribute to enhanced confidence at parliamentary level and hence foster the peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict. However, for the tripartite forum to become a reality, goodwill and action from both sides – Israel and the Palestinian authority – are needed.
19. In this regard, the Assembly resolves to continue facilitating contacts between members of the PLC and the Knesset at parliamentary level.
20. The Assembly firmly believes that the only way to establish peace and stability in the region is through democracy, respect for all human rights and the rule of law.
21. Furthermore, the Assembly reaffirms that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority should be viewed within the broader context of the Middle East region and the volatile situation and insecurity in countries like Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, and the destabilising and threatening activities of Iran, thus making it indispensable to create dialogue among all countries of the region. It resolves to facilitate contacts at the parliamentary level with the region as a whole.
22. The Assembly condemns acts of terrorism, including the abduction of civilians, which is increasingly frequent in the region and which ultimately affects the stability of the whole region, and should be brought to an end in order for the region to avoid being confronted with a new cycle of atrocities, as has recently been the case in the terrorist attacks in Morocco and Algeria. The Assembly also condemns the spiritual, political and financial support from foreign governments, first and foremost Iran, to organisations and groups that spread violence and commit terrorist acts in the most sensitive regions of the Middle East: Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Iraq. The Assembly strongly condemns these attacks.
23. The Assembly is deeply concerned for the safety of the BBC reporter Alan Johnston, who was kidnapped in Gaza on 12 March 2007, and calls on the kidnappers to release him immediately. Several foreign journalists have been kidnapped in the Palestinian territories since January 2006, but all have been freed, and several media outlets have been attacked. The Assembly also deplores that Didier François the correspondent of the French newspaper Libération, was wounded on 17 December 2006 in a shooting incident in Gaza. Recalling its [Resolution 1535 \(2007\)](#) and [Recommendation 1783 \(2007\)](#) on threats to the lives and freedom of expression of journalists, the Assembly calls on the Palestinian Authority to ensure proper investigations of these attacks on journalists and the media. The Assembly furthermore recalls its

Resolution 1438 (2005) and Recommendation 1702 (2005) on freedom of the press and the working conditions of journalists in conflict zones, and its Recommendation 1706 (2005) on media and terrorism, and urges the Palestinian Authority to do everything in its power to ensure that journalists can work safely and without undue restrictions.

24. The Assembly calls on the Palestinian leaders to:
 - 24.1. renounce violence, recognise the state of Israel within secure, internationally recognised borders and comply with past agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority;
 - 24.2. enforce law and order;
 - 24.3. protect and consolidate the nascent opportunity to establish a renewed dialogue and serious negotiations with Israel;
 - 24.4. ensure that internal differences between Fatah and Hamas do not slow down or impede dialogue with leaders from Israel;
 - 24.5. release Israeli soldiers against whom no precise charges have been brought;
 - 24.6. to end the daily launching of Kassam rockets.
25. The Assembly calls on the leaders of Israel to:
 - 25.1. start working with the Palestinian government of national unity;
 - 25.2. confirm, by concrete action, Israel's expressed commitment to the resumption of negotiations and political dialogue;
 - 25.3. facilitate the trade and movement of Palestinians;
 - 25.4. release those Palestinian parliamentarians and ministers against whom no precise charges have been brought;
 - 25.5. resume the transfer of outstanding Palestinian revenues;
 - 25.6. put an immediate end to the construction of the security wall;
 - 25.7. commit themselves to implement all United Nations' Security Council resolutions.
26. The Assembly calls on parliamentarians from the Knesset and the PLC to co-operate with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in order to pave the way for the organisation of the tripartite forum.
27. The Assembly calls on the European Union to:
 - 27.1. actively contribute to the creation of a positive climate enabling the resumption of peace negotiations;
 - 27.2. continue its financial assistance to the Palestinian people and thereafter monitor the expenditure of funds.
28. The Assembly calls on the parliaments of the region to contribute to regional stability and to engage in a meaningful dialogue for peace.
29. At the same time the Assembly resolves to explore the possibility of organising a round table with representatives of civil society, scholars and youth organisations, both from Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in order to share views on the Arab-Israeli peace process.