

UN Security Council
Open Debate
The Situation in the Middle East, including the
Palestinian Question
12 July 2016

INDIA STATEMENT
Ambassador/DPR Tanmaya Lal

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this quarterly open-debate.

2. The situation in the Middle East region remains of serious concern and is getting increasingly fragile and unpredictable. The growing threat of terrorism and radicalism has added to the complexities of the situation in the region, which is mired with protracted conflicts.

3. The most longstanding of these conflicts involving Israel and Palestine, remains strained with the peace talks suspended for more than two years now, with no signs of resumption at least in the near future. The situation appears to be getting worse with escalating violence on both sides and absence of restraint and moderation. The dire humanitarian situation in Palestinian territories and violence in Israel demands urgent and sustained efforts on part of the global community to resume peace talks.

4. We welcome the recent visit of the Secretary General to Israel and Palestine. As the Secretary General has said, courageous steps are necessary for a negotiated two-State solution in order to bring lasting peace, security and dignity for the people of both Israel and Palestine.

5. A two-State solution is the only viable option for sustainable peace in the region. It is the responsibility of the two sides to ensure that they move closer to a solution rather than away from it. In this regard we stand with others in emphasizing that the international community must be firm in its resolve to assist the people on both sides wherever required. The security Council must take a lead in this endeavor.

6. In this context, we welcome the first report of the Middle East Quartet on the impediments to a lasting resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its recommendations to advance the two-state solution through negotiations. We also welcome the French peace initiative and the International Conference held last month in Paris, aimed at reviving the peace talks. We hope that the efforts by the international community can lead to building some common ground, generate mutual understanding and a common political horizon, on which the two sides can start the talks again. We are of firm belief that there can only be a politically negotiated solution to this issue for a lasting and durable peace.

Mr. President,

7. India has a longstanding record of solidarity with the Palestinian people, support to the Palestinian cause and assistance for Palestine's nation building, human resource development and capacity building efforts. A just solution to the issue must result in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and relevant UNSC Resolutions.

8. Our continued commitment with the Palestinian cause and our friendship with the Palestinian people is reflected in the continuing engagement with the Palestinian leadership and the recent high level exchanges including visits to Palestine by Indian leaders in the recent months, including at the level of President, and Minister of External Affairs.

Mr. President,

9. On Yemen, we welcome the announcement of Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed last week about an agreement on the guiding principles for the Yemen peace talks. We hope that the UN-supported talks, which will enter a new phase in the coming weeks, will lead to a consensus based solution.

Mr. President,

10. On Syria India welcomes the briefing of UN Special Envoy for Syria, Mr Staffan de Mistura. We hope for a comprehensive political resolution of the conflict with the participation of all parties. We further hope that the intra-Syrian talks under UN auspices will ensure a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned inclusive political transition, bringing an end to the violence in Syria and contribute to stabilizing the country and the region.

11. The humanitarian situation in Syria remains a concern and has to be addressed effectively. India remains committed to provide bilateral humanitarian assistance to Syria.

Thank you.
