

Questions and Answers on Palestine's Security Council Resolution to end the Israeli Occupation

· Why are Palestinians going to the Security Council?

More than 20 years after the beginning of the negotiations (process), Israel, the occupying power, has continued its illegal colonization enterprise and relentless violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people. Over that period of time the number of settlers has almost tripled and the settlement infrastructure has continued to grow. Israel's illegal siege on Gaza and the rest of Palestine through various measures of collective punishment and its unprecedented offensive against Palestinians in Occupied East Jerusalem, has deepened the humanitarian hardships of the Palestinian civilian population.

The deterioration has been dramatic and this initiative at the Security Council is an effort to redress this situation by reaffirming the rights of the Palestinian people, reaffirming the parameters of a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and mobilizing the international community to uphold its responsibilities and to salvage the two-State solution and the prospects for peace.

The Security Council is the international body in charge of preserving world peace and security and it has been marginalized for too long when it comes to the question of Palestine. We are asking the Members of the Security Council to assume their responsibilities under the Charter and to contribute to diffusing this volatile situation, which constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security, and to contribute to bringing an end to 47 years of Israeli military occupation, colonization and oppression in Palestine. It is not only a right for Palestine to call upon the Security Council to take action, but it is an international responsibility to put an end to decades of systematic violations of UN resolutions and grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, being committed with impunity by Israel, and to act to promote peace and stability.

· What are the main points of the resolution?

The draft resolution reaffirms basic principles of international law such as the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and previous resolutions that call for a two-state solution. It also reaffirms the illegality of Israeli settlements and any Israeli measures aimed at changing the status quo of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and stresses the imperative need to resolve the issue of the Palestine refugees on the basis of international law and UNGA resolution 194. The draft resolution calls clearly for an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by no later than the end of 2017, the year which would mark 70 years since the partition plan (UNGA resolution 181) and 50 years since the onset of the occupation, under which the Palestinian people have unjustly suffered for far too long. The draft resolution also makes reference to the Arab Peace Initiative, which calls for full normalization of relations between the Arab World and Israel should Israel honor its obligations by withdrawing to the 1967 border and accept a just solution to the refugee issue in accordance with the parameters above.

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The draft resolution calls for the resumption of negotiations to solve all final status issues by no later than 12 months after the adoption of the resolution and ensures the end of the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 will come no later than the end of 2017. It calls for two sovereign, democratic and secure states, Palestine and Israel. At the same time, it calls for the immediate reconstruction of Gaza and for the adherence of the international community to its obligations under international humanitarian law.

- Is this is a unilateral step?

No. The UN is by definition a multilateral forum. Palestine is asking the international community to uphold to their responsibilities and commitments in accordance with the Charter, international law and countless UN resolutions. Unilateral is, for example, when Israel builds settlements in occupied land against international law. Those who claim that our resolution is a unilateral step base their argument mainly on the fact that Israel does not agree with it. But the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including notably our right to be free, is not Israel's decision. It is a long overdue right for the Palestinian people. In this regard, we are proud that the General Assembly adopted, on 18 December 2014, the resolution on the "Right of the Palestinian People to Self-Determination", by a vote of 180 in favor, reaffirming the overwhelming support of the international community for the Palestinian people's right to freedom.

- Does the UN resolution close the doors for a negotiated two-state solution?

No. This draft resolution calls for meaningful negotiations based on international law and UN resolutions aimed at justly solving all final status issues – Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, security and water. All parameters for negotiations included in the resolution are a matter of wide and longstanding consensus among members of the international community.

- Why are Palestinians going now to seek such a resolution?

The question is not why now, but why not before. For decades Israeli has violated international law and UN resolutions and disregarded the will of the international community with impunity and contempt, with disastrous consequences for the situation on the ground and the Palestinian civilian population suffering under its occupation, as well as for the prospects for peace and stability in the region. This must end. Our freedom is long overdue and the international community bears the responsibility to end decades of occupation, exile and oppression unjustly inflicted on our people.

- What if the draft resolution doesn't pass?

The Palestine Liberation Organization has made clear its goal to achieve justice and peace through all peaceful means and will use all the mechanisms rightfully at its disposal.