



6 June 2016

French Middle-East Peace Initiative

The meeting on the Middle-East peace initiative was opened in the presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and representatives of nearly thirty States and international organisations. This meeting was the result of French efforts to rally the international community with a view to creating a context conducive to the resumption of peace talks.

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There is no denying the fact that the situation between the Palestinian territories and Israel is deteriorating and that there are no direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations under way. It is important, therefore, that the initiative be resumed at an international level to create a context conducive to peace talks.

The President of the Republic opened the meeting on the French Middle-East peace initiative before some thirty or so foreign delegations:

- Since the start of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, **France has continuously sought to restore peace** as it is aware of its responsibilities in this part of the world.
- **France is bound by its unfailing friendship with both of the populations concerned.**
- **A great deal of progress has already been made**, including the UN Security Council resolutions, the Madrid Principles, the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet roadmap involving the United States, the EU, Russia and the UN.

Jean-Marc Ayrault declared that France is seeking nothing for itself and that it will continue to defend its position in order to achieve an Israeli State and a Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security, with Jerusalem their joint capital.

With this in mind, France has three firm beliefs:

- **The need to move beyond the current status quo** to avoid extremism and terrorism. Jean-Marc Ayrault reiterated the fact that "Daesh propaganda is already exploiting the sense of despair that reigns in the Palestinian territories and in camps in Jordan and Lebanon".
- Talks regarding the conditions surrounding the definitive settlement of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians must **take into account the region as a whole**, along with the fact that **threats and priorities have changed** (war in Syria and Iraq, fundamentalist terrorism, etc.).
- **It will be down to the Israelis and the Palestinians, and to them alone, to make the brave choice of peace.** It is not about taking the place of the stakeholders concerned but rather about providing guarantees that the peace will be strong, sustainable and internationally monitored. It is important to tell the Palestinians that there are prospects and the Israelis that France is seeking a solution that will then enable the Israelis and the Palestinians to resume negotiations in the hope of definitively resolving the conflict.

France proposes to **act in two stages, first with this meeting and then with the creation of working groups** resulting from this meeting, to identify what might facilitate talks between Israel and the Palestinian territories and consolidate the agreement that is reached when the time comes.

Every effort will be made to help ensure that the outcome is peace. Strong signs must be sent out on either side of the conflict:

- **Hamas must accept the remit outlined by the international community**, that is recognising the State of Israel and the agreements signed and renouncing violence. A step in this direction has already been taken in the form of the Palestinians themselves deciding to withdraw the draft resolution on colonisation that they aimed to present to the UN.

- **The colonisation of Palestinian territories must end:** it is unlawful in the eyes of international law and represents an obstacle to lasting peace.



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRENCH INITIATIVE FOR PEACE IN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

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