



19 December 2023, Santa Fe

H.E. President E. Macron
55, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré 75008 Paris, France

Subject: Resolving the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Mr President,

On the matter of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict; in recognizing its intergenerational human responsibility as an existential imperative,^[1] the international community must act now through all legal and diplomatic means to: (a) bring an immediate and lasting ceasefire in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Israel to allow for life-saving aid to reach those in urgent and desperate need; (b) ensure enduring human security for both Israeli and Palestinian peoples; (c) fulfil the Palestinian desire for a sovereign and free state, and (d) initiate a genuine and sustainable development process in the Middle East region.

President Macron, the World Sustainability Forum welcomes the remarks made today in the UNSC by France's ambassador, who rightly insisted that France "cannot accept the abuses that deprive Palestinians of their rights and their land" and called "for a new immediate, lasting humanitarian truce, which must lead to a lasting ceasefire". For as you noted: "There is no lasting security for Israel in the region if its security comes at the cost of Palestinian lives and therefore the resentment of all public opinion in the region."

The Forum has encouraged heads of states, including among many others: Taoiseach Leo Varadkar of Ireland; Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez of Spain; President Lula da Silva of Brazil; South Africa's President C. Ramaphosa; inter-governmental organizations, and others to consider the seven integrated measures advocated herein as the possible basis for a binding Resolution. For as the region reaches a tipping point, France has a special responsibility and could taking a leading role in re-thinking peace in the Middle East.

As a result of the protracted conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, an expectation prevails within the global community for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to equitably discharge its Charter responsibilities through the resolute execution of UNSC Resolution 2712.^[2] While applauding the UNGA Gaza ceasefire resolution of 12 December 2023, we note that is non-binding,

Recognizing the existential imperative to uphold human responsibility and safeguard the human security and human rights of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, the Forum expresses profound regret and grave concern with the distressing resumption of hostilities in the Gaza strip. The Forum urgently implores the combatant parties to promptly re-engage in negotiations and intensify their efforts to establish a lasting ceasefire. For the provision of life-saving aid to the people of Gaza, this is indispensable from both a humanitarian and human rights standpoint.

The forced displacement of successive Palestinian generations is a systematic challenge to realizing the vision of an autonomous and viable state of Palestine in accordance with UN Resolutions pertaining to this matter. Yet it underscores the significance of the two-State solution as a means to address the unresolved political and territorial issues surrounding the rights, responsibilities, status, and future of the peoples of the region. This issue remains a concern that weighs heavily on the global moral conscience.

Respecting the aspirations of the Palestinian peoples, the Forum urges the international community to fully implement relevant resolutions put forth by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. At risk of losing its humanity, the international community cannot permit the humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories to continue, nor can it tolerate further civilian suffering or losses.



In the face of unfettered devastation and suffering, humanity must prevail.

The innovative approach to a two-State solution advocated herein could prompt a re-thinking and enable the prompt establishment of an independent State of Palestine. The latter is pivotal to fostering peaceful coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples; promoting a culture of peace, and ensuring sustainable development of the Middle East region. For the Forum affirms that development, peace and security, human rights and human responsibilities are mutually reinforcing. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

In accordance with the United Nations Charter, the Forum is mindful that the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for upholding international peace and security, making its engagement vital on matters related to Palestine. Yet the Forum appreciates the precedence and legal bearing of Resolutions 242, 338, 377A(v), 687, 1397, 1515 and 2334. With the conviction that a military approach to the conflict will neither provide peace nor security for the parties, the Forum has and will continue to encourage UNGA member states to recommend:

1. Enacting a lasting ceasefire and cessation of hostilities: The conflicting parties should sincerely uphold the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), promptly instituting an enduring and consistently honoured humanitarian pause. In accordance with UNSC Resolution 2712, the Security Council is urged to explicitly demand a comprehensive cessation of hostilities, actively fostering de-escalation and expeditious resolution of the conflict.

2. Ensuring the robust protection and well-being of civilians: Security Council Resolution 2712 explicitly mandates all involved parties to adhere to their responsibilities under international humanitarian law, with particular emphasis on the protection of civilians. It is imperative to cease any acts of violence directed towards civilians and to abstain from violating international humanitarian law by refraining from assaults on civilian facilities. Furthermore, the Security Council should assertively oppose the involuntary displacement of the Palestinian population, strive to avert the expulsion of Palestinian civilians, and advocate for the swift release of all individuals currently held captive in violation of international law.

3. Ensuring humanitarian aid: In accord with UNSC Resolution 2712 all relevant parties are urged to diligently uphold their obligations under international law by enabling and expediting the prompt and unhindered flow of humanitarian aid for the distressed civilian populace across Gaza. It is imperative to abstain from impeding the provision of aid and services crucial for the sustenance of the civilian inhabitants in Gaza. The creation of humanitarian corridors in Gaza is advocated to facilitate swift, secure, unobstructed, and sustainable access to humanitarian aid.

The Forum calls upon the Security Council to foster heightened humanitarian relief efforts, amplify the humanitarian conditions on the ground, endorse the United Nations' coordinating role, and lend support to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East in its humanitarian pursuits. Moreover, concerted efforts are needed to prepare the international community for contributing to the reconstruction of Gaza in the aftermath of the conflict.

4. Strengthening diplomatic mediation: In accord with the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is encouraged to fulfil its designated role in fostering peace. The Forum recommends that the Council urges conflicting parties to exercise restraint and avert a further escalation of the conflict. Acknowledging the importance of regional countries and organizations, and the potential role of new geopolitical actors, the Forum urges the Security Council to assist the UN Secretary-General and the Secretariat in their endeavours. Furthermore, regionally influential member States are encouraged to adopt a judicious posture, collaboratively contributing to the de-escalation of the crisis.

5. Pursuing a diplomatic resolution: In accordance with UN Resolutions 242, 338, 377A(v), 1397, 1515 and 2334 [3] and other relevant UN Security Council resolutions and global consensus, an equitable dissolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can be achieved with the realization of two states for the two peoples. The restoration of the national rights of Palestine and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, exercising complete sovereignty within the confines of the 1967 borders and designating East Jerusalem as its capital, is imperative. While geopolitical complexities, political dynamics, and internal divisions have impeded progress, the international community and the Palestinian peoples have advocated for the two-State solution as a viable framework for achieving enduring peace. [4]

The Forum calls for a diplomatic resolution and the prompt convening of a comprehensive, authoritative, and effective international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations. This conference should include a concrete timetable, roadmap and clear steps for the implementation of the two-State solution. Reaffirming UNSC Resolution 1397 and the Arab Peace Initiative's recognition of the State of Israel and the Palestinian State, its primary objective should be to facilitate a comprehensive, fair, and lasting resolution to the Palestinian question. It is crucial that any agreement concerning the future of the occupied Palestinian territories including Gaza fully upholds the autonomous will and independent choices of the Palestinian people, ensuring that no arrangements are forcibly imposed upon them.


6. Establish a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East. Recognizing human responsibility as an existential imperative, the objective is to enhance trust, regional security, and safeguard the human rights and security of inhabitants. By virtue of UNSC Resolution 687[5], France has a special responsibility to work to establish a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East. The establishment of a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone requires an unequivocal repudiation of the presence of nuclear armaments. Simultaneously, it must incorporate a legally binding commitment to achieve comprehensive nuclear disarmament within a clearly defined and attainable time frame. [6]

7. Financing Peace and Sustainable Development: Create a Middle East UN Peace and Sustainable Development Fund [7] to finance reconstruction and a sustainable development program. Acknowledging the emergence of a new geo-economic dynamic in the Middle East that increasingly includes the BRICS, and the need for a mechanism for greater investment partnerships that integrates rather than divides economic blocs, a Middle East U.N. Peace and Development Fund could be co-financed by:

- a general disarmament-for-debt financing mechanism involving structured agreements wherein a country commits to substantial disarmament measures in exchange for alleviation or restructuring of its existing debt [8] and
- the crowding-in other funding streams, including those from regional sovereign funds, to promote sustainable economic development involving Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other nations in the region.

With my esteemed colleagues, including H.E. Dr Federico Mayor Zaragoza and H.E. Maria F. Espinosa, I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this seven point proposal with you and to encourage the France to advocate for these measures in the UN General Assembly, the Security Council and in other international venues.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.


Kenneth Stokes, PhD
President & CEO
World Sustainability Forum
Madrid, Rome, Santa Fe

Tel: +1 919.273.6912 (WhatsApp)
Skype: kenneth.m.stokes
E-mail: kmstokes@worldsforum.org

Endnotes:

[1] The World Sustainability Forum advocates for a UNGA Resolution on an intergenerational Declaration of Human Responsibility as the necessary counterpart to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[2] Resolution 2712 (2023). Adopted by the Security Council at its 9479th meeting, on 15 November 2023.
<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2712>

[3] UNSC Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/242>; UNSC Resolution 338 of 13 August 1973. https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_res_3381973.pdf; Resolution 377A(v) of 5 November 1950; Resolution 1397 of 12 March 2002. <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SRES1397.pdf>; Resolution 1515 of 19 November 2003. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1515>; Resolution 2334 of 23 December 2016. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2334>.

[4] See UNSC Resolution n 1397 of 12 March 2002. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/IP%20SRES%201397.pdf>. See also The Arab Peace Initiative of 2002. https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=a5dab26d-a2fe-dc66-8910-a13730828279&groupId=268421

[5] See UNSC Resolution 678 of 8 April 1991, paragraph 14.
<https://www.un.org/depts/unmovic/documents/687.pdf>

[6] A proposal for a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone aimed at preventing the development, deployment, and utilization of nuclear weapons in the Middle East was formally introduced in the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution 3263, adopted on November 29, 1974.

[7] The United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF) was established in 2016, following the pledge by the Government of the People's Republic of China to contribute \$200 million US dollars to the United Nations over a ten-year period. The United Nations and the Donor Government seek to achieve the goals of the Charter of the United Nations through implementation of innovative, forward-looking and pro-active projects and activities financed by the Trust Fund.

Consistent with the proposal made herein, since its inception, UNPDF has supported projects and activities around the world, covering areas including peacekeeping security, rapid response system, prevention and mediation, counter-terrorism, strengthening partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, poverty alleviation, science and technology, small- and medium-sized enterprise, education, health care, etc.

[8] A disarmament-for-debt financing mechanism involves a structured agreement whereby a country commits to verifiable, substantial disarmament measures in exchange for the alleviation or restructuring of its existing debt. Implementation may involve a phased disarmament process, multi-modal verification mechanisms, and the establishment of an independent oversight body to ensure compliance. The international community could play a pivotal role in facilitating negotiations, providing financial incentives, and monitoring the progression of disarmament efforts. This mechanism seeks to balance the triad of regional security and peace with the sustainable development in the Middle East, thereby promoting a cooperative framework for simultaneously addressing the three issues.