

Policy Brief

President Abbas's Peace Initiative: Saving the Two-State Solution

Context

- The two-state solution, as endorsed by the UN and the overwhelming majority of the international community, has been supported by the PLO/PA since 1988.
- A one-state, two-systems reality is being imposed through unabated settlement construction in the occupied West Bank; the intention is to divide and fragment the Palestinian territories, thereby precluding the establishment of a contiguous and viable Palestinian state. This is a prime example of *fait accompli*, and also the most urgent threat to the two-state solution.
- Continued intransigence by Israel's ruling right coalition further dispels any uncertainty as to their intentions – they will use any and all means possible to suppress Palestinian self-determination.

Defending the two-state solution

- Means respecting and adhering to international law and the rules-based system. To ignore or deny Palestinian human rights (including the right to statehood) is to effectively spurn this system.
- **Requires:** **1)** deterring Israel's illegal colonial project by denying the benefits (financial or otherwise) of further and indefinite settlement expansion.
2) the formal recognition of the existence of two states, which would categorically delegitimize Israel's one-state, two-systems reality.
3) reinforcing the 4 June 1967 borders as the concrete, legal demarcation for a two-state solution. This also means challenging Israel over its evasiveness on this issue, and demanding that it delineate, in no uncertain terms, its own borders.
4) Israel's recognition of Palestine to reciprocate the PLO's 1988 decision to recognize it. Among other things, this would inject more credibility into the peace process.

The Palestinian peace initiative

1. **Convening an international peace conference** by mid-2018 whose determinations are to be guided by international law and relevant UN resolutions. It will have wide international participation, including the two concerned parties, the permanent SC members and the international Quartet. There will be a call for full UN membership for the State of Palestine (the SC to action this with consideration given to GA resolution 67/19, 29 November 2012), and for international protection of Palestinian civilians (the urgency of which has been highlighted in Gaza). After President Trump's Jerusalem decision, there is a need for a third-party, multilateral and fair-minded body to oversee future negotiations to resolve the final status issues outlined in the 1993 Oslo Accords, to set implementation timeframes, and to hold both sides accountable to international law.
2. **Refraining from unilateral actions** that would prejudice the outcome of a final, negotiated solution (including the cessation of settlement expansion and the suspension of the Jerusalem decision).
3. **Implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative**, especially respect for SC resolutions 242 (1967) through to 2334 (2016), preservation of the two-state solution, recognition of East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital, security guarantees, refugees, water, etc.