

We thankfully accept the invitation of the honorable Secretary-General of the United Nations to call in a conference that will negotiate the Arab Peace Initiative for the last time.

The Palestinian Authority, as the representative of the Palestinian people, supports the Arab Peace Initiative as it was approved and reapproved by the Arab league.

We believe the API offers the region the best opportunity for peace and prosperity, and all our demands are in accordance with the API and UN resolutions. We call Israel, which did not respond to the Initiative, to accept it and agree to a comprehensive peace agreement based on the principles of justice.

Our positions in detail are the following:

### 1. Borders

The PLO has accepted that Israel's 1967 Pre-Occupation borders (the "Green Line") shall serve as the international border between the states of Palestine and Israel. In other words, Palestinians have recognized Israel on 78% of historic Palestine while accepting to create a state on the remaining 22%. The PLO's position is consistent with international law which forbids Israel from acquiring territory by force.

### 2. Colonies

Israeli colonies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are not only illegal<sup>1</sup> but also threaten the chances of achieving a practicable solution. As part of a viable two-state solution, all Israeli colonies must be evacuated, including those located in Occupied East Jerusalem. One way to achieve a peaceful evacuation of the colonies would be for the government of Israel to remove all economic and other incentives luring Israelis into Occupied Territory while simultaneously providing similar incentives for current settlers to move back to Israel.

### 3. Jerusalem

East Jerusalem will be the capital of the Palestinian state. As part of the territory occupied in 1967, Israel has no right to East Jerusalem. It is part of the territory over which the indigenous Palestinian population shall exercise sovereignty upon Israeli withdrawal.

In conformity with international law and as stated in the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, all of Jerusalem (and not merely East Jerusalem) is the subject of permanent status negotiations.

Within Jerusalem, irrespective of the resolution of the question of sovereignty, there should be no physical partition that would prevent the free circulation of persons within it. Jerusalem should be an open and save city.

Palestine and Israel shall be committed to guaranteeing freedom of worship at and access to religious sites within Jerusalem. Both states will take all possible measures to protect such sites and preserve their dignity.

### 4. Refugees

Under international law, both the 1948 refugees and the 1967 displaced persons have a recognized right to return. The PLO believes that a just settlement of the refugee issue implies the granting of the right of return to all Palestinian refugees that had to flee as a result of the 1948 and 1967 wars including their offspring. Furthermore, losses resulting from displacement and dispossession need to be compensated. Once Palestinian refugees are able to exercise their right of return, they also might prefer to choose other options than returning to their original place of residence such as settling in the newly created independent Palestinian state, resettling in third countries or staying in the host country and normalization of their legal and political status there.



<sup>1</sup> The presence of Jewish settlers violates the requirements of the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding protection of civilian populations under occupation.

## **5. Water**

Since fair allocation of water rights is a critical element for future political stability in the region as a whole, Palestinians accept international law and how it governs the allocation of freshwater resources shared by Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We demand compensation for water unjustly taken, and a fair access to the four aquifers and the Jordan River.

Affirming its commitment to reaching a peaceful and agreed end of our long-standing conflict, the PLO emphasizes that a new and just beginning with a Palestinian independent state existing side by side with Israel must be based on these five core-principles.

