



**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**

Statement delivered by

Marc PECSTEEN de BUYTSWERVE,  
Permanent Representative  
of Belgium to the UN

Briefing Middle East Peace Process

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Mister President,

I thank Special Coordinator Mr. Nickolay MLADENOV for his statement.

On Sunday May 17 the new Israeli government was sworn in bringing an end to months of political uncertainty. We look forward to working with the new Israeli government in a constructive and comprehensive way, in the spirit of the longstanding friendship that binds us. We hope that this government will be a partner for the relaunch of the peace process in line with international law and through direct negotiations between the parties.

We remain deeply concerned about provisions in the coalition agreement regarding the prospect of annexation by Israel of parts of the occupied Palestinian territories. If put into practice, these would constitute a clear breach of international law, including the UN Charter and the resolutions of this Council. Belgium, together with its European partners, will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders,

including Jerusalem, than those agreed upon by the parties through direct negotiations. We will continue to distinguish between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

As friends and close partners of Israel, we strongly advise the Israeli government against any step towards annexation. We also call on the international community, and especially those states with influence, to exert all efforts to prevent any such steps. As stated by the EU HR/VP BORRELL, 'steps towards annexation, if implemented, could not pass unchallenged'. Indeed, annexation would risk entailing significant legal, political, security and other consequences. Not only for Israel but also for the wider region. Furthermore, annexation would further undermine any prospect for a just and durable solution, and would mean the irreversible end of any prospect of negotiation about any meaningful peace plan . We call on all partners to refrain from unilateral decisions that would undermine or seriously hamper prospects for a return to the negotiation table. We also call on parties to continue implementing all agreements and understandings. In this regard, we note with concern the recent announcement by President Mahmoud Abbas.

Mr. President,

The framework for the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been set out in detail in numerous resolutions of this Council. Belgium

remains committed to a negotiated two-state solution that meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation that began in 1967, and resolves all permanent status issues, including the issues related to borders, the status of Jerusalem, security and refugees, in order to end the conflict.

It is important that the international community increases its efforts to help achieve a just and lasting peace. We stand ready to work with all relevant stakeholders towards renewed international and multilateral efforts aimed at achieving this goal, be it through existing frameworks, such as the Quartet, or new ones. We however stress the need for these efforts to be fully in line with international law and the internationally agreed parameters and to take place on the basis of direct and meaningful negotiations between the parties. Only a solution that is acceptable for both sides will be able to pave the way for a sustainable peace, not only for Israel and Palestine, but for the wider region as a whole.

