

22 - India calls for Israel, Palestine peace talks based on global consensus
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With Israel in the process of forming a government and Palestine facing elections in the coming months, India has said the international community must use this phase to focus on how to encourage the parties back to "meaningful negotiations" for achieving a peaceful solution to the dispute.

Israel and Palestine have been in conflict for decades over various political issues such as borders, refugees and the control of Jerusalem. The two-state solution has for decades been the primary focus of efforts to achieve peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The two-state solution has for decades been the primary focus of efforts to achieve peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

India has consistently called for direct peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine, based on a global consensus on the end-goal of a two-state solution, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador TS Tirumurti said at the Security Council briefing on the Middle East (Palestine) on Thursday. He said resolution 2334 adopted by the Security Council calls for advancing the two-state solution through negotiations as well as to reverse negative trends on the ground, which includes settlements.

UN Special Coordinator Tor Wennesland told the Council expressed deep concern over the continued Israeli settlement expansion, particularly into highly sensitive areas, which entrench the Israeli occupation, erode the possibility of a contiguous, independent and viable Palestinian State and further threaten the prospect of achieving a two-State solution.

The solution would establish an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel two states for two peoples. In theory, this would win Israel security and allow it to retain a Jewish demographic majority (letting the country remain Jewish and democratic), while granting the Palestinians a state.

Urging Israel to cease the advancement of all settlement activity immediately, Wennesland reiterated that settlements have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law. He further said that Palestinian unity is essential for progress and free, fair and inclusive elections throughout Gaza and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are a first step.

The international community must continue, throughout the process, to support Palestinian efforts to restore democracy and legitimacy to their national institutions. This includes the deployment of observation missions despite COVID-19 challenges.

Taking note of the efforts by Government of Israel to facilitate the transfer of vaccines to Palestinian territories, India welcomed efforts of member states and various UN agencies in supporting the Palestinian Authority's preparedness to receive and administer vaccines, including through the COVAX facility.

India has voluntarily contributed USD 15 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) over the past three years and has committed another USD 10 million for 2021-2022.