

ACDP POSITION ON: A Palestinian Unilateral Declaration of Statehood

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The only way to achieve a true and sustainable peace is through negotiations. A unilateral declaration of statehood violates the basic principle of a negotiated peace.

An attempt to force a one-sided solution through International pressure is counterproductive and will not resolve the conflict.

The ACDP calls on the Palestinian leadership and Israel to return to the negotiating table without preconditions, so that a genuine and lasting resolution can be found.

The 'South African way' is through direct dialogue and negotiation in order to reach peace. The same should be the standard for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and SA should lead and advocate this model in this and all conflict-solving around the world.

It should be emphasized that the issue being discussed is not the question of the establishment of a Palestinian state but rather the means being used to achieve this end. Unilateral actions will not lead to peace, but will complicate any peace process.

All past attempts to import a solution to the conflict from outside have failed. History has shown that the peace treaties between Israel and its neighbors were made possible by negotiations between the parties. In this case as well, peace will only be achieved in direct negotiations.

Even if a resolution regarding a Palestinian state is reached in the UN, the Palestinians will not be able to avoid negotiating with Israel if they wish to achieve peace. None of the core issues – including borders, Jerusalem, refugees and water - will be resolved by a UN resolution.

A unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood undermines all internationally accepted frameworks for Mideast peace (UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1850; the Roadmap; Quartet statements, etc.), which call for a mutually-negotiated and agreed resolution of the conflict and which have consistently rejected unilateral actions. This view has recently been reinstated by the quartet and endorsed by Israel.

A unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood would violate existing Palestinian-Israeli bilateral peace agreements, most notably the Interim Agreement from 1995, which expressly prohibits unilateral action by either side to change the status of the West Bank and Gaza prior to reaching a negotiated permanent status agreement.

The ACDP does not support a Palestinian Unilateral Declaration of Independence.