

## **DRAFT**

### **Joint Communiqué – December 2006**

President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert met today and reiterated their partnership and determination to pursue a meaningful and just peace process that would lead to a negotiated settlement, and the end of the conflict based on a two state solution and the other principles outlined in the Road Map, including the Arab Peace Initiative. The leaders also expressed their determination to fully implement all previous agreements concluded between the parties. The leaders agreed that both the Palestinian and Israeli people have suffered enough and it is now time to advance the peace process with concrete measures, and to immediately cease taking any steps which may prejudice the outcome of any of the issues to be resolved during permanent status negotiations. The leaders hope that this summit will be the first step towards rebuilding the trust between the Palestinian and Israeli leadership and people and establishing a fruitful partnership of the peoples of this Holy Land.

In furtherance of this goal, a joint Palestinian-Israeli Committee will be formed to agree on new arrangements and parameters for the immediate release of the Palestinian prisoners. This committee will begin work immediately, and submit its recommendations to the two leaders in order to ensure that the release of these prisoners will commence as soon as possible, and not later than the next meeting of the two leaders. The government of Israel will make all necessary internal and procedural arrangements for securing the release of the prisoners on the agreed date.

Another important step towards the goal of a just peace is the leaders' commitment to take all necessary steps to ensure a mutual cessation of violence against the other whereby the government of Israel will stop violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Palestinians will stop violence against Israelis. In order to further these efforts, the leaders agreed to form a Joint Security Committee in order to deal with ongoing issues that may arise in maintaining the mutual cessation of violence ("tahdiya") and to facilitate the transfer of security responsibility to Palestinian areas and the implementation of the previously agreed arrangements for the fugitives (intifada "activists").

The parties will work together in this committee to create a list of these intifada "activists" to be handed to the PA and on the effective date these activists will discontinue any militant activity of any kind and their weapons will be controlled and under the custody of the PA. Activists who wish to live in cities handed over to PA security control can move to any of these cities and can return to their home towns once they are transferred to PA security control. Modalities of PA supervision concerning activists who live in a city not handed over to PA security responsibility will be discussed in this joint committee.

It has also been agreed that Palestinians who have previously been deported from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip including those deported to Europe, or deported from the

West Bank to the Gaza Strip, will be allowed to return to the places they resided in on the eve of their deportation.

Israel will not harm or act against any activist or deportee covered by these arrangements regardless of their past.

Security coordination will be resumed to try and act jointly against imminent threats of harm to Israelis or Palestinians wherever such a threat to the peace process occurs. Israel has committed to not undertake further arrests, targeted killings or other unlawful actions against Palestinians in the West Bank or Gaza Strip whom Israel designates as wanted, suspect or under investigation.

Prime Minister Olmert committed to take immediate and concrete steps towards relieving the humanitarian conditions for the Palestinian people, including by full implementation of the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, including all of the provisions of that agreement regarding Karni and Rafah crossings, the internal closure regime, movement between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the construction of the port and the operation of the airport. The government of Israel will immediately begin the permanent removal of the internal closure regime inside occupied Palestinian territory, in order to allow for the socio-economic life of the Palestinians to recover. Prime Minister Olmert confirmed that Israel had already removed [XXX number] checkpoints at key locations inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip this morning. The Parties agreed that Israel will continue to eliminate checkpoints and barriers to Palestinian movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The checkpoints that have been removed will not be replaced by alternative permanent or temporary measures. In addition, construction will begin on rebuilding the harbor in the Gaza Strip and preparations for rehabilitating the airport in the Gaza Strip will commence. The Israeli government will immediately transfer all withheld Palestinian funds, which are urgently needed for basic provisions such as water, electricity, hospitals, medical supplies and other humanitarian needs.

The Israeli side reaffirmed its previous Road Map commitment to remove all illegal settlement outposts. The Palestinian leadership made clear its objection to the construction of a barrier in the West Bank and demanded that Israel stop construction of the barrier within the 1967 borders and remove those portions built therein in compliance with the ruling of the International Court of Justice and the decisions of United Nations General Assembly. The Palestinian side urged the Israeli government to stop all construction in, and growth of, the settlements and their supporting infrastructure in line with Israel's Road Map obligations.

In accordance with the Road Map, Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem including the Chamber of Commerce will be re-opened.

The Joint Steering and Monitoring Committee will be re-established, in order to follow up on all of the issues outlined in this communiqué, as well as to be an emergency coordination body for unanticipated events. The committee will report back to the respective sides on all progress before the next meeting of the two leaders.

This meeting heralds a new era. We are now back in the process of trying to bring peace, security and stability to our peoples. We will meet again on [XXX] to discuss progress on our commitments arising from this meeting and to ensure that we are not again derailed from achieving our common goal of a just peace and the vision of two states living side by side.