



December 29, 2016

Palestinian Reactions to UN Security Council Resolution 2334



Left: Picture on the Fatah Facebook page thanking the countries that proposed Resolution 2334 (Facebook page of Fatah, December 23, 2016). Right: Fatah cartoon the UN resolution as "Palestine" stabbing the settlement project (Facebook page of Fatah, December 24, 2016).

UN Security Council Resolution 2334 and Its Implications

1. On December 23, 2016, a majority vote in the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2334 (in accordance with Chapter VI of the UN Charter). The resolution deals mainly with the Israeli settlements, over which there is a broad international consensus. The resolution was proposed by New Zealand, Senegal, Venezuela and Malaysia after Egypt withdrew its original proposal. Fourteen Security Council members voted in favor; the United States abstained, allowing the resolution to be passed.

2. **The resolution focuses on the Israeli settlements in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem**, represented as violating international law and as the main obstacle to peace and the two-state solution. However, **the weight of terrorism in the resolution is relatively slight**. As opposed to clear and unequivocal wording about the settlements, wording about Palestinian terrorism is mostly general and vague, and the Palestinians can be expected to interpret the paragraphs as directed against Israel (as Hamas has already begun to do).¹



The UN Security Council votes on Resolution 2334
(UN website, December 23, 2016)

3. The main points of the operative paragraphs of the resolution are the following (ITIC emphasis throughout):

A. **"...the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;"**

B. The Security Council reiterates "its demand that **Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem**, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard;"

¹ For further information, see the December 29, 2016 bulletin "How UN Security Council Resolution 2334 Relates to Palestinian Terrorism."

C. The Security Council "**will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem**, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations;"

D. The Security Council calls for "**immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction** [i.e., razing the houses of terrorist operatives], calls for accountability in this regard, and calls for compliance with obligations under international law for **the strengthening of ongoing efforts to combat terrorism, including through existing security coordination [between Israel and the Palestinian Authority]**, and to clearly condemn all acts of terrorism;"

4. Exceptionally, **the entire spectrum of Palestinians supported the resolution**, even Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which usually do not rush to give Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) diplomatic credit. That is because all the Palestinian factions regard the resolution as **a useful tool to promote their international political campaign against Israel** and at the same time, as far as they are concerned, **the resolution does not commit them to abandon terrorism and violence, which they attribute to Israel**.

5. Resolution 2334 is basically a statement of intent. It does not change the legal status of the settlements, whose existence the international community considers as violating international law (according to the Fourth Geneva Convention, which forbids an occupying power from moving its nationals to an occupied territory). **It also does not include an enforcement apparatus or sanctions**. However, the PA's success in the Security Council can be expected to **encourage it to promote initiatives that will turn the resolution into operative international measures against Israel, using Resolution 2334 as a source of authority**.

Senior Palestinian figures have made initial statements regarding the operative measures they think should be implemented in the wake of the resolution, for example including an appeal to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, a demand that FIFA stop the activities of Israeli soccer teams from Judea and Samaria, bringing to trial important Israeli political and military figures with connections to the settlements, and having European countries boycott the settlements. **The PA and the PLO are already discussing other operational plans**.



Hamas cartoon: Obama scores a goal against Israel. The apathetic figure at the left is Egyptian President el-Sisi (al-Risalah, December 27, 2016).

The PA

Overview

Senior Palestinian figures expressed satisfaction with Resolution 2334, which they represented as **a historic feat and a Palestinian diplomatic victory**. They consider it as **international recognition for the Palestinian state and as a tool they can use to pressure Israel into stopping construction in the settlements**. They have also expressed hope that the resolution **will lead to the taking of practical measures against Israel**.

6. Spontaneous demonstrations of joy broke out throughout Judea and Samaria with the announcement of the vote. The Palestinian social networks also expressed satisfaction and the hope that the resolution would lead to the cessation of construction in Judea and Samaria. Some Internet users condemned Egyptian President el-Sisi for withdrawing the original proposal, and also criticized Egypt for not standing shoulder to shoulder with the Palestinian people. Many social networkers expressed thanks and solidarity with the countries that proposed the resolution in place of Egypt. Others expressed concern lest Israel harm the Palestinian population in retaliation.

7. The weekly government meeting headed by **Rami Hamdallah** expressed its thanks to the countries that had initiated the proposal and appreciation for their courage, and thanks to all the countries that supported the proposal, especially Egypt. **The government emphasized that the international community should not content**

itself with passing the resolution, but had to make sure it was translated into action because of Israeli threats to increase construction in the settlements. He said that every new decision made by the Israeli government about the settlements could be considered "aggression," not only against Palestine but against the whole world (Wafa, December 26, 2016).

8. The Bethlehem-based Ma'an News Agency held a public opinion poll on its website. According to the results, **75% of the respondents said the resolution was of no significance and would not be implemented**; 20% called it "historic" and **4.9% said it signaled a new stage in the conflict with Israel** (Ma'an, December 26, 2016).

Initial Statements of Exploiting Resolution 2334 to Promote Operative Measures against Israel

Resolution 2334 can be expected **to encourage the PA to promote other measures against Israel** in various international institutions and countries around the globe, citing it as their **source of authority**. Senior Palestinian figures have already made their initial references to possible directions of action. Apparently **PA and PLO institutions have already begun thinking about how best to turn the resolution to their advantage**.

9. On December 27, 2016, the PLO's Executive Committee met, chaired by Mahmoud Abbas. Members of the committee said they considered the resolution a victory for international law and a rejection of the policies of the government of Israel. **They discussed further measures to take in the wake of the passage of the resolution** (Ma'an, December 27, 2016).



Meeting of the PLO's Executive Committee, chaired by Mahmoud Abbas (Ma'an, December 27, 2016).

10. Senior Palestinian figures have already made initial declarations about translating Resolution 2334 into practical measures:

A. **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said the Palestinian leadership **would now appeal to the ICC** to "investigate the various crimes of Israel, especially the settlements." He said that from now on **the Palestinian leadership would take steps based on the UN Security Council resolution** (Ma'an, December 27, 2016).

B. **Ziad Abu Ziyad, Fatah spokesman for international media**, praised the Palestinian people and the Palestinian mission to the UN. He said **the next step would be an appeal to the ICC in The Hague and to other international institutions. He said the ICC would receive files condemning everything connected to the settlements as well as accusations against senior Israeli political and military figures who had connections to them** (Ma'an, December 24, 2016).

C. **Jibril Rajoub, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, who was also chairman of the Palestinian soccer organization, said the resolution strengthened the Palestinian demand that FIFA stop the activities of Israeli soccer teams from the West Bank. **He said the Palestinians planned to appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) if FIFA did not meet their demands.** He also said the Palestinians would continue their campaign until they realized their rights (al-Ayam, December 25, 2016).

D. **Jamal Nizal, Fatah spokesman in Europe**, said the UN's "historic resolution" against the settlements was a precedent that **would pave the way for Europe to take effective steps to stop the "crime of the settlements."** He called for the settlements to be boycotted in every respect (Ma'an, December 24, 2016).

Responses of Senior Palestinian Figures

11. **Mahmoud Abbas**, speaking at a Christmas event in Bethlehem, welcomed the resolution and called on Israel to come to the negotiating table. He said the world had finally made its position clear, after having been silent about the illegal settlements for 36 years. He added that the resolution meant the world was telling Israel to abandon its faulty policies, which would not lead to peace. He said he hoped the **international conference in Paris on January 15, 2017**, would establish guidelines for a peace process, including a timetable for its implementation, and that **an international apparatus would be appointed to sponsor the peace talks** (Wafa, December 24, 2016).



Mahmoud Abbas praises the Security Council resolution during a Christmas event in Bethlehem (Facebook page of QudsN, December 25, 2016).

12. Other responses were the following:

A. **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, called the resolution "historic" and a victory for the Palestinian people, claiming it would lead to the end of the "settlement project." He thanked the countries of the world for their support. He also called for implementing resolutions dealing with Palestine, including the settlements, to be investigated. He claimed the UN had a

weighty responsibility for investigating the settlements (Palestinian TV, December 26, 2016).

B. Riyad al-Maliki, foreign minister in the Palestinian national consensus government, called it a "historic resolution" that returned the Palestinian cause to the head of the Security Council's agenda, after 36 years had passed since the last resolution. He said the resolution had been passed thanks to Palestinian diplomatic activity. He said the Palestinians had planned the stages gradually and monitored them, and created pressure within the Security Council until it climaxed with the vote (Palestinian TV, December 25, 2016).

C. Riyad Mansour, Palestinian representative to the UN, called the resolution a very important and encouraging step **in preparation for the international conference in Paris**. He congratulated the Palestinian people and thanked them for their firm stance in their daily struggle against the occupation, which had inspired the Palestinian leadership to take significant diplomatic steps in the international arena (Dunia al-Watan, December 24, 2016).

Responses of Hamas and Other Terrorist Organizations

Overview

Hamas and the other terrorist organizations supported the resolution, even though they usually do not give Mahmoud Abbas and the PA diplomatic credit and although the resolution supports Israeli-Palestinian security coordination. **Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau, stressed Hamas' commitment to continuing the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism], even if it meant "convoys of shaheeds," until all the lands of Palestine had been restored to the Palestinians. Musheir al-Masri, a senior Hamas figure, expressed the Palestinian position, saying that international objections to terrorism, as they appeared in the resolution, were aimed at the crimes of the "Zionist occupation" [and not Palestinian terrorism].**

Hamas

13. **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** issued Hamas' official response to the resolution. He said Hamas esteemed the countries that had voted for the resolution and rejected the policies of the "Israeli occupation." Hamas also welcomed the change in international positions supporting the Palestinian people, and demanded more in the

future for the sake of the Palestinian cause and the end of the [Israeli] occupation (Hamas website, December 26, 2016).

14. **Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau**, called the resolution an important step in the recognition of the Palestinian people and in **correcting America's "faulty policies."** He said it would have influence because it was the first time the UN had opposed the settlements and showed the world their inherent danger. However, he claimed more was needed, **because any plan that did not include the restoration of all the Palestinians' lands, Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque, did not provide a suitable solution.** He also made it clear that **the only way to victory and liberation was the path of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] even if it meant "convoys of shaheeds"** (al-Aqsa, December 25, 2016).



Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau, speaking at a meeting with Turkish students in Istanbul (YouTube, December 24, 2016).

Senior Hamas figure Musheir al-Masri said the resolution was particularly important because it emphasized international objection to terrorism and the crimes of the "Zionist occupation," especially the settlements (al-Mayadeen, December 24, 2016).



Hamas cartoon. The Arabic reads, "The Security Council and the resolution to stop the settlements" (Twitter account of Palinfo, December 24, 2016).



Cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha doubts Israel will implement the resolution. Left: Israel stands on the resolution, keeping it from being implemented Right: The resolution will be used as a club to force the Palestinians to carry out UN resolutions (Hamas' al-Risalah, December 27, 2016)

Other Terrorist Organizations

15. The **PIJ welcomed the resolution**, calling it a clear condemnation of Israel's policies and aggression, and a moral victory for the Palestinian people. **Senior PIJ figure Daoud Shehab** said there was now international agreement against Israel and its policies, and that a genuine opportunity had presented itself to **isolate Israel, boycott it and try its crimes in an international court of law.**

16. The **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** welcomed the resolution. It said in a statement that the resolution strengthened the illegal status of the Israeli settlements and made it clear that Israel had blatantly violated international law. It also said that the resolution stressed that **the Palestinian people were in effect victims of "fascist racist incitement" and terrorism, violence and the "Israeli occupation."**