



Rome, March 2011

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

on

The Middle East Peace Process and the Arab Peace Initiative
of the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights

Rapporteurs: Mário DAVID (EP), Seddik CHIHEB (Algeria)

The Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean,

- A. whereas since the Israeli declaration of independence the escalation in violence has resulted in several Arab-Israeli military confrontations, and whereas international efforts to bring about a negotiated peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours have been unflagging but unsuccessful;
- B. whereas there is a critical need for political action by Israel, its Arab neighbours and the entire international community to find a comprehensive solution which will end the conflict and contribute to the security and stability of the region;
- C. whereas a comprehensive peace, which is vital to the interests of the parties in the region, must be achieved on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions (particularly Resolutions 181, 242, 338, 1397 and 1515), the Madrid principles, particularly land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative;
- D. whereas international efforts to facilitate negotiations on all final status issues, including borders, Jerusalem and refugees, need to be supported; whereas the Middle East Quartet must be actively involved in the peace process and the significance of the Arab Peace Initiative and continued cooperation with the Arab partners must be recognised;
- E. whereas the Arab Peace Initiative is the main peace proposal on the table and takes account of all the territorial conflicts in the region (Palestine, Lebanon and Syria);
- F. whereas the Arab Peace Initiative is a radical shift in strategy away from the 'Three No's Policy' adopted at Khartoum in 1967 (no to peace with Israel, no to recognition of Israel, no to negotiations with Israel), in that not only does it insist that a military solution to the conflict is impossible, but it presents a collective peace with Israel as a strategic choice for the Arab countries; the aim of this strategy is to put an end to all territorial claims and, as a result, to the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- G. whereas all the peoples in the region have an indivisible right to security, and whereas the commitment by the signatories to the Initiative to provide security in the region constitutes a guarantee of security that is a corollary to a peace agreement with Israel;
- H. whereas the Arab Peace Initiative emphasises that Israel must agree to negotiate a 'fair solution' to the issue of Palestinian refugees; whereas Israel, in its peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, has already agreed to a negotiated solution to the issue of refugees that is in keeping with the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 242; and whereas Israel has legitimate concerns over a potential flood of Palestinian refugees returning to parts of Israel outside the country's pre-1967 borders;
- I. whereas the collective nature of the peace proposed by the Arab Peace Initiative has been strengthened by the repeated demonstrations of support for the Initiative by the member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, which has brought the number of Arab

and/or Muslim states backing it to 57;

- J. whereas the Initiative has been widely recognised, particularly in the statements made by the United Nations Secretary General at the Arab League Summit in Riyadh on 28 March 2007, in the Quartet's positive response as of 2003, in the reference made to the Initiative in the Roadmap and the Quartet's renewed support when the Initiative was reaffirmed in 2007, and in the references to the Initiative in many EU statements;
1. Reiterates that a comprehensive peace between Israel and all Arab countries will help to make any future Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement more sustainable; is confident that reaching a comprehensive peace would improve security in the region and make it possible for any remaining security risks to be dealt with jointly;
 2. Maintains that there can only be a lasting peace if it is based on a lasting commitment to non-violence, justice and mutual recognition, building on previous agreements and legal obligations; international law must be respected at all times by all parties;
 3. Emphasises that any final agreement between the parties must bring about an end to the conflict, the full recognition of the State of Israel by the Arab states, an end to all acts of terrorism and the normalisation of relations with Israel as set out in the Arab Peace Initiative;
 4. Notes the points made by the Arab League follow-up committee in 2009 on clarifying the provisions of the Arab Peace Initiative, in particular with regard to the future integration of Palestinian refugees in host countries and the resettlement of refugees in a future Palestinian State, the creation of a demilitarised Palestinian State, and a time frame for the normalisation of relations with Israel;
 5. Specifies that the two-state solution envisions a region in which two states, Israel and Palestine, exist side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders; the future Palestinian State must be stable and viable and the borders of the State of Israel must be secure and recognised;
 6. Believes that negotiations should take place in order to make the city of Jerusalem the future capital of the two states; Jerusalem is of special importance for all the parties concerned and any unilateral initiative to change the status of the city will be rejected;
 7. Considers, given the need to continue the reform of the Palestinian Authority, that the state-building work funded by EU contributions should be supported; points out that even if the EU is ready to expand its assistance package to Palestinians, this commitment is not open-ended, and insists that, while humanitarian aid must remain unconditional, the EU must play a political role that delivers tangible progress towards the creation of a viable Palestinian state and that this progress must be commensurate with the EU's significant financial assistance to and economic influence in the region; the Palestinian Authority should therefore address concerns regarding security and political and administrative reform without delay;
 8. Invites the Quartet to work together with the Arab League as part of an ongoing commitment to peace; this collaboration should involve expanding the group to a Quintet with the Arab League as the fifth member;

9. Calls on Israel to freeze all settlement activities as a gesture of good faith, and objects to the continuing settlement building, as it undermines the mutual trust necessary for any peace negotiation and weakens the authority of the Palestinian negotiators; recalls that building settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem, remains illegal under international law and goes against Israeli commitments under the Roadmap;
10. Commends the Palestinian Authority for launching a Hebrew-language publicity campaign in Israeli newspapers on 20 November 2008 in order to raise awareness of the Arab Peace Initiative; welcomes similar steps taken by Israel; calls for a renewal of these efforts and invites the Union for the Mediterranean, the European Union and the Arab League to support such campaigns;
11. Affirms that any fair and equitable solution to the issue of Palestinian refugees will be supported provided that it guarantees the continued existence of the State of Israel; an agreement between the two parties is necessary and must be respected by them both;
12. Emphasises the urgent need to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and find a solution that addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns, including an end to weapons smuggling into Gaza and to rocket attacks on Israel;
13. Recalls that opening the crossings to make the unhindered distribution of humanitarian aid and the free movement of commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza possible is vital for growth, development and the well-being of the Palestinian people, as made clear in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009);
14. While recognising the Arab League's efforts to promote the Initiative, believes that the governments on both sides must endeavour to prepare public opinion in their countries for peace by highlighting the benefits in terms of economic development, regional integration and the right of all the peoples of the region to live in security and dignity;
15. Believes that symbolically powerful gestures are needed to break the current stalemate and move towards a regional peace; in that connection, invites the Arab and Israeli leaders to consider reciprocal visits in due course in order to emphasise their willingness to reach a comprehensive peace agreement;
16. Calls for the creation of a parliamentary contact group, modelled on the Arab League follow-up committee, in each UfM country and in the European Parliament in order to broaden the scope of the efforts to promote the Arab Peace Initiative and increase its democratic legitimacy;
17. Recommends that a day of debates on the Arab Peace Initiative be held in the parliaments of all the UfM countries and in the European Parliament;
18. Believes that an international peace-keeping force could be deployed to ensure the implementation of the peace agreement and maintain border security;
19. Instructs its Chair to forward this recommendation to the Government of the State of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the Co-Presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Secretary-General of the UfM Secretariat, the League of Arab States, the Council of

Ministers of the European Union, High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton, the European Commission, the parliaments and governments of the member states of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the European Parliament.