

JOINT STATEMENT
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING BETWEEN THE
STATE OF PALESTINE AND THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN
21 November 2024, Madrid, Spain.
(v1.1)

The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Mustafa, and His Excellency Mr. Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of the Government of Spain, launched the first intergovernmental meeting between the State of Palestine and the Kingdom of Spain in Madrid on November 21st 2024, to strengthen the growing bilateral relation between both countries. It was the first intergovernmental meeting since the recognition of the State of Palestine by the Kingdom of Spain on May 28th.

Palestine and Spain: Partnering for Peace and Prosperity

Palestine and Spain call for the urgent need to put an end to the war on the Gaza Strip. Both sides call for the full implementation of all United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including Resolution 2735 adopted on June 10th 2024. They reiterate their imperative call for a full, complete and lasting ceasefire to allow the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale and the release of all hostages and detainees.

Both sides condemn any act of violence against civilians, including all acts of terrorism and indiscriminate attacks, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction.

Both sides reaffirm their commitment to the implementation of the two-States solution by ending the Israeli occupation, materializing the independent, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine, and achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People to self-Determination, independence and return in line with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. Spain commits to promote international recognition of the Palestinian State as an indispensable element of the implementation of the two-States solution, which is the only pathway to permanent peace, security and economic prosperity in the region. For this purpose, both sides reiterated their call for an international peace conference. We welcome the formation of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the two-States Solution, announced by Saudi Arabia, the EU and Norway, on September 26, 2024 in New York.

Palestine welcomes the ministerial meeting hosted by Spain on September 13th 2024 for the implementation of two States with the members of the Arab-Islamic Contact Group on Gaza and the European countries committed to promoting the recognition of Palestine, which concluded with the adoption of the Madrid Declaration, renewing the irrevocable commitment of the participants to the implementation of the two-States solution.

The State of Palestine strongly appreciates Spanish aid –which tripled in 2023- and Spain’s steady support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which plays an essential role for millions of Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle East and particularly in the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Both parties reiterate their unwavering commitment to the works of UNRWA and other United Nations agencies. Palestine and Spain underscore the essential services provided by UNRWA in Gaza and across the region and condemn the Israeli government attempt to undermine or obstruct its capacity to operate its mandate.

Spain expresses its support to the reforms agenda initiated by the Palestinian Government and reiterates the need for the Palestinian Government to resume its responsibilities in the Gaza Strip as the unified Government for all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Spain also reiterates its engagement with the reinforcement of the government and the reconstruction of Gaza the day after. Spain expresses its commitment to launch a new bilateral Cooperation Strategy, building on the shared priorities in which Spain has special added value but also adapting to the needs and priorities derived from the current context. By means of this new Bilateral Strategy, the AECID would allocate at least 75 million euros in support to Palestine in 2025-2026.

Palestine and Spain reiterate their unbreakable commitment with International Law, multilateralism and an international rules-based order, the only approach that can lead to a future of peace and stability. In line with this undoubted commitment with International Law, they insist on the implementation of the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice, which demand to take all measures to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of the Genocide Convention, a halt of the military offensive in Rafah, and to maintain open the Rafah crossing for the unhindered provision at scale of urgent humanitarian aid to the Gaza strip.

Spain’s commitment to International Law is further enhanced by the presentation on June 28th of a declaration of intervention before the International Court of Justice in the procedure against Israel on the "Application of the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip". Spain took part in the proceedings initiated by South Africa in the International Court of Justice to support the role of this court as the highest judicial body of the United Nations system and as guarantor of a rules-based multilateral order. With its intervention, Spain seeks to contribute to the return of peace to Gaza and the Middle East. The goal is to end the war and begin to advance the implementation of two States, which both Spain and Palestine insist is the only guarantee so that Palestinians and Israelis can live together in peace and security, and achieve stability throughout the region.

Both sides also recognise that economic prosperity in the region hinges on the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinian economy continues to be under a massive shock. Revenue streams have largely dried up due to the drastic reduction in clearance revenue transfers payable to Palestine and a substantial drop in

economic activity. Both sides called on Israel, the occupying power, to release withheld tax revenues and customs duties, and for Israeli banks to be allowed to process payments with Palestinian banks. Spain will also work to improve Palestinian access to European and international markets.

Palestine and Spain express once again their firm commitment to the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the end of the Israeli occupation based on international law and United Nations resolutions, and to work towards this end with the European Union, the Union for the Mediterranean and other regional and international organizations.

Towards a vision of regional stability

Palestine and Spain condemn the dangerous escalation in Lebanon, affirm their support for the Lebanese people, and call for an immediate ceasefire. Both sides call on intensifying international and regional efforts to provide urgent humanitarian aid to Lebanon to alleviate the suffering of civilians and protect them from any war repercussions. Both sides also call for restraint and de-escalation and preventing the expansion of the conflict to the wider region and stress the need to implement Security Council Resolution 1701 and other relevant international resolutions to restore lasting security and stability in Lebanon and ensure respect for its territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders.

Palestine and Spain recognize the essential stabilizing role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces and UN interim force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and condemn the attacks against its positions. The parties have to immediately end these attacks, and comply with its obligations under International Humanitarian Law and Security Council Resolution 1701. Attacks on peacekeeping operations are a violation of International Humanitarian Law and they undermine stabilization efforts.

Palestine and Spain reassert their firm commitment to the Mediterranean partnership and to the organization that embodies it, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Both agree that the UfM must make greater progress in order to adequately respond to present and future needs. To this end, Palestine and Spain reiterate their support to the reform process that aims to strengthen the UfM institutionally and functionally so as to turning it into a robust regional organisation tackling common issues of concern in the Mediterranean region.

Capacity-building the Palestinian State

Palestine and Spain commit on deepening cooperation to advance in capacity and institution-building for the Palestinian State. To contribute to this aim the first intergovernmental meeting between the State of Palestine and the Kingdom of Spain celebrated on November 21st included meetings among Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Education and Labour.

In the field of Labour and Employment initiatives, the Ministers of Labour agree to collaborate on initiatives aimed at improving labour opportunities and rights,

particularly focusing on youth and women. This includes sharing best practices, developing joint seminars or initiatives and supporting vocational training programs. They also welcome the inclusion for the first time of the State of Palestine in the Technical Cooperation Program of the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy of Spain and the joint work on social economy and strengthening of cooperatives and livelihoods, developed together with the International Labour Organization in 2024 in Palestine. The Ministry of Labour of Palestine also welcomes the Spanish initiative to promote a “Global Charter of Labour Rights” at multilateral level.

In the field of Youth and Children, the Ministers agree to collaborate on programs to protect and promote the rights of children and young people as the most effective hope and guarantee for their future. This includes initiatives focused on the recognition of their rights, participation, education, culture, health and social integration. More specifically, the exchange of programs to create a comprehensive child protection system in Palestine, with a focus on working with United Nations agencies and civil society organizations to ensure the rights of Palestinian children to be safe from violence and its consequences, especially children who are victims of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

In the field of Education, the Ministers of Education discuss enhancing educational exchanges, fostering partnerships between educational institutions cooperating in the field of vocational training and promoting cultural understanding through various forms of collaboration, including language and student exchange programs as well as the organization of joint initiatives and activities.

In the field of Cooperation in Security and Interior Affairs, the Ministers of Interior discuss measures to enhance cooperation in security, law enforcement, police training, fight against serious crime and terrorism, while respecting human rights and international norms.

As a conclusion of the first intergovernmental meeting, Palestine and Spain express their commitment to continue working closely together to implement the agreements reached during this meeting. They also reaffirm their dedication to maintaining regular consultations at the ministerial level to ensure the success of these initiatives.

Palestine and Spain express optimism about the future of Spain-Palestine relations and their shared vision of a just, peaceful, and prosperous future for the Middle East region.

The first intergovernmental meeting concluded with the signing of the following documents on the fields of mutual interest:

- Memorandum of Understanding on employment and labour issues
- Memorandum of Understanding on Education
- Memorandum of Understanding on Youth and Children
- Memorandum of Understanding on Agriculture