

## Middle East peace effort lacks progress on political front – UN reports

1 May 2017 – The lack of progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is impeding Palestine's development, according to a new United Nations report, which also reiterates the international community's commitment to a two-state solution in the region.

The report, issued by the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process ([UNSCO](#)), notes that "despite a number of international efforts over the past six months to advance the two-state solution, last year has been characterized by a [continued lack of progress](#) on the political front."

In contrast to recommendations outlined in the [July 2016 report by the Middle East Quartet](#), there has been "a surge in Israeli settlement-related activity and a continued high rate of demolitions in Palestinian and Bedouin communities" as well as "continuing acts of violence against civilians, signs of a deepening political rift between Gaza and the West Bank, and continued military build-up and firing of rockets by extremist groups in Gaza."

This environment threatens the erosion of the achievements of the Palestinian state building effort, according to the report.

"The institutions of Palestinian governance remain vulnerable to political instability and require affirmative steps to protect and advance state-building efforts," the authors wrote.

The report also notes a "deepening political rift" between Gaza and the West Bank. Tensions between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas are aggravating a "difficult situation in the Gaza Strip" with an intra-Palestinian disagreement over issues such as electricity access and payment of salaries.

Analysing the impact of the Hamas take-over ten years ago and the ensuing Israeli closures and conflicts, the report notes that "Gaza is facing a downward spiral of de-development, while the people in Gaza are caught in a cycle of humanitarian need and perpetual aid dependency."

The report covers the period from 15 September 2016 to 15 April 2017.

It will be presented to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) at its bi-annual meeting in Brussels on 4 May. The Committee, chaired by Norway and co-sponsored by the European Union and the United States, serves as the principal policy-level coordination mechanism for development assistance to the Occupied Palestinian Territory.