

**IBSA STATEMENT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT AND THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL PRESS TAKE OUT AREA, ON DECEMBER 19, 2012**

India, Brazil and South Africa reiterate their grave concern regarding the Israeli settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem.

The IBSA countries condemn the recent announcement of the construction of the so-called "E-1" area and other settlement constructions in the Palestinian Territory, which jeopardize the prospects for a two-State solution.

In this regard, the IBSA countries believe that continuing settlement activities by Israel is not only illegal under international law but also a major obstacle to peace efforts.

We reiterate our call on Israel to stop settlement activities. Freezing settlement construction is, however, not enough. Settlements must be dismantled and the occupation must end

This is not a concession to be made in the course of negotiations, but rather an obligation as per various resolutions of the Security Council and International Law.

We condemn the violence by settlers against Palestinians and their property. Action is required against those indulging in such violence. We are also deeply disturbed by evictions, demolitions of Palestinian homes and other measures that alter the realities on the ground.

The IBSA countries believe the Security Council has an essential, irreplaceable role to play in the peace process. The promotion of peace in the Middle East is in the interest of all members of the United Nations and cannot be delegated to third parties. The Security Council can contribute by calling for a complete halt to settlement activity,

calling for the implementation of its own resolutions and receiving regular reports by the Quartet on progress achieved or lack thereof.

The granting of Observer State status to Palestine by the General Assembly, with unequivocal support, made it clear that there is no alternative to the two-State solution in the quest for peace in the Middle East. The IBSA countries call on both sides to resume negotiations on the pending issues, with a view to the prompt realization of the two-State solution, with a cohesive, secure, democratic and economically viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel.

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