



**South African Statement for the General Debate of the High-Level
International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the
Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State
Solution**

29 July 2025

Delivered By Minister Lamola

Co-Chairs,

South Africa welcomes this crucial discussion on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

This Conference takes place at a time when we are witnessing the destruction of Gaza and its people in real time, in a brazen and wanton act of genocide in full view of the world.

South Africa continues to condemn the horrific events of October the 7th where innocent Israeli citizens were killed.

Despite this challenging context, in which the international legal and multilateral system has been paralysed and turned into a blunt tool, the focus today on a real path to lasting peace must prevail.

The might is right doctrine can no longer be justified. It has led to perpetual insecurity and it justifies an attempt to eradicate the Palestinian people through killing and starvation.

Co-Chairs,

South Africa hopes that this conference will plot a real path forward, based on concrete actions, for the creation of a Palestinian State existing peacefully, and side by side with the State of Israel, along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Resolution 181 adopted by the General Assembly in 1947, provided for the creation of two states, at a time when South Africa and many other developing countries were under the yoke of colonialism. Many of us have attained our freedom and independence. However, the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, guaranteed under international law, has remained elusive for close to 80- years.

In the week preceding this Conference a concerning message was sent when the Israeli Knesset adopted a motion calling for applying Israeli sovereignty over the occupied West Bank, and the Jordan Valley, signalling the intention of Israel to Annex this territory. This could effectively bury the Two-State solution and continue with the blatant violation of international law, including UN resolutions and ICJ rulings which have given hope to the Palestinian people. Their hopes must not be in vain, peace must prevail.

Co-Chairs,

South Africa is anti-war and prefers dialogue over violence.

South Africa would like to stress the following points as fundamental to restoring the credibility of the Two-State solution:

Firstly, all states must urgently recognise Palestinian statehood, and the territorial integrity and contiguity of Palestine should be established and respected, in this regard South Africa welcomes the intentions of recognition of the state of Palestine by France as an important step towards achieving a two state solution.

Secondly, there cannot be peace while the very existence of the Palestinian people is being threatened by Israel's continued genocidal actions in Gaza and the forced displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank. This is part of a systematic pattern of injustices and oppression of Palestinians since the adoption of Resolution 181 and the subsequent Nakba in 1948. These actions must be condemned, and the UN Security Council must act to protect the Palestinian people in whole and in part.

Thirdly, preserving the viability of the two-state solution must include promoting safeguards such as the full respect for international law, including international humanitarian law, and human rights law. It is necessary for the immediate and full implementation of resolutions of the United Nations and the Provisional measures as well as Advisory Opinions of the International Court of Justice.

Not only Israel, but all States, must comply with our collective obligations under international law. We all have a duty to preserve the sanctity of international law and ensure accountability. It's against this backdrop that we have seen, the establishment of the Hague Group, and the recent meeting of the Madrid Group to elevate the primacy of international law, promote accountability and ensure a just peace.

Finally, all obstacles to the two-state solution should be removed. This includes:

- (a) an immediate ceasefire and a commitment to a peace process;
- (b) the release of hostages by Hamas and political prisoners by the state of Israel.
- (c) the halting of illegal Israeli settlement expansion;
- (d) the removal of the illegal separation wall cutting across the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and
- (e) the resumption of all internationally reputable humanitarian relief efforts and the reconstruction of Gaza, which of course can only take place once there is peace.

Co-Chairs

Global attention is on this Conference. There is an expectation that we will deliver an effective response to the destruction of an entire population and a peaceful path for preserving the prospect of a viable Palestinian State existing side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. This expectation is not misplaced, and it could not be higher.

Eighty years since the founding of the United Nations, this is a matter that has plagued our collective conscience. The solution lies with a tangible re-commitment from all of us to the values that bind us.

I thank you.