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## ***Summit in Riyadh: commitment to Palestinian statehood***

**The extraordinary Arab and Islamic Summit in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, has become an important stage for developing a unified position on the situation in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.**

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[The summit](#), attended by the leaders of more than 50 Arab and Islamic countries, including participants of the extraordinary summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the League of Arab States (LAS), adopted a final statement unanimously emphasising the importance of the Palestinian issue.

Words cannot express the plight of the Palestinian people

### **Gideon Saar's provocative statement**

The final statement reaffirms its strong support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to freedom and the establishment of an independent state with full sovereignty. The participants confidently stated that al-Quds (Jerusalem) will remain the eternal capital of Palestine.

This happened against the backdrop of heightened regional tensions, when Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar strongly rejected the creation of a Palestinian state being a 'realistic' goal, saying that such a scenario was impossible. He strongly [rejected](#) the creation of a Palestinian state following Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' reaffirmation of his commitment to creating a 'sovereign' country.

“I do not think this position is realistic today, and we have to be realistic”, the newly appointed minister said in response to a question about the creation of a Palestinian state in exchange for normalisation of relations between Israel and Arab countries.

Saar’s remarks followed the ongoing massacre of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and attacks on little Lebanon, which have drawn widespread international criticism and condemnation around the world.

### **Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud’s firm tone**

At the summit, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud condemned the “massacre” carried out by Israel against the Palestinian and Lebanese populations. He called on Israel to stop its aggression immediately. In his address to the joint meeting of the League of Arab States and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the crown prince stated that Israel’s actions are “a gross violation of international law and previously achieved peace initiatives”.

Ahmed Abul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League, spoke in the same vein, joining the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia in condemning the ongoing bloody attacks by Israel. He emphasised that the actions of the Israeli military against the Palestinian people undermine all efforts to achieve lasting peace. “Words cannot express the plight of the Palestinian people”, Abul Gheit said. In his opinion, lasting peace in the region can only be achieved through justice.

### **Showing solidarity with the Palestinian people**

In his address before summit participants, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called on Arab and Islamic countries to show solidarity with the people of Palestine. He called for the immediate implementation of UN resolutions to stop the bloody Israeli aggression in Gaza and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged territory. It is well-known that those rare humanitarian convoys headed for the Gaza Strip to save Palestinians from starvation are being shelled by the Israeli military.

Before the summit, the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas called for the creation of a unified Arab and Islamic coalition to put pressure on Israel and its supporters and put an end to the ongoing atrocities in Gaza and Lebanon. The summit further reinforced this call for collective action, believing that victory and the creation of a Palestinian states may only be achieved in unity.

### **Syrian president condemns ongoing Western support of Israel**

The toughest speech at the summit was made by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who compared Israel’s actions to Nazi atrocities. At the same time, he condemned the

continuous Western support of Israel, primarily from the United States, which, in his opinion, “fuels Israeli violence”. Reflecting on previous peace initiatives, al-Assad criticised the failure of initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative and the Madrid Conference, saying that these efforts have proved ineffective in combatting “Israeli violence and arbitrariness”. He called for a fundamental change in approach, insisting that decisive action – not just words – is needed to ensure Palestinian rights and end Israeli crimes.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also spoke sternly at the summit, warning that Israel is seeking to destroy the Palestinian state and eventually annex all Palestinian territories with its brutal attacks that have killed at least 44,000 Palestinians since last year. “The ongoing Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip and the intensification of repression against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank is proof that the situation is going down this path. We must call on as many countries as possible to join the case of South Africa against Israel in the International Court of Justice”, Erdogan said at the summit of Arab and Islamic states.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who was unable to attend the summit due to urgent state affairs, expressed his country’s full support in a telephone conversation with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud. Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref attended the summit on behalf of Iran and stressed Tehran’s commitment to “collective efforts to end Israeli aggression and restore justice in the region”. Echoing Pezeshkian’s message, in his address Reza Aref confirmed “the need for decisive collective action to stop Israel’s crimes”. He proposed holding a referendum among the Palestinians as part of Iran’s strategy to restore their right to self-determination. The Iranian politician stressed that real steps must be taken to “put an end to the bloodshed and satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people”.

#### **Final declaration of the summit**

The final declaration adopted at the summit underlines the “urgent and decisive need for international action”. In this regard, the statement urges the international community to put pressure on Israel to end the deadly military operations in Gaza and Lebanon, protect the civilian population and ensure humanitarian access to the Palestinian and Lebanese territories.

The summit, which took place at the suggestion of the Islamic Republic of Iran and following diplomatic efforts and numerous contacts by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, stressed the need for a unified position of Arab and Islamic countries in

opposing Israeli aggression and working to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region.

The ongoing escalation of violence in Gaza and Lebanon continues to require urgent action by regional powers and many leaders reaffirm their commitment to ensuring peace and justice for the Palestinian people.

But all this, unfortunately, is only in words; Israel is carrying out continuous air and ground strikes on Gaza, destroying hospitals, residential buildings, scientific centres and religious sites. Since September 23, the Israeli military has also intensified its offensive against Lebanon, carrying out intensive airstrikes against Hezbollah forces. The Lebanese Ministry of Health reports 3,189 dead and 14,078 injured since the beginning of the conflict in October, 2023. On October 10 alone, according to Lebanese media reports, 24 people were killed as a result of Israeli strikes on southern and eastern Lebanon.

Nevertheless, the summit in Riyadh was an important step towards the establishment of a Palestinian state. The gathering of numerous political figures from the OIC and the Arab League demonstrated a rare unity in understanding the processes that are taking place in the Middle East. If, along with positive resolutions, they can take unified collective action, they will be able to make Israeli politicians understand that peace in the region and Israel's security should be sought only at the peaceful negotiating table.

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