



## Israeli Confidence Building Measures Towards the Palestinians

(November 14, 2007)

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[Israel](#) believes that the new Palestinian Government - established after the takeover of [Gaza](#) by [Hamas](#) terrorists in June 2007 - provides a renewed opportunity to move forward in the [peace process](#) toward the realization of the two-state vision. It is in this spirit that [Israel](#) has recently taken practical steps to assist the Palestinian government, led by President [Mahmoud Abbas](#) and Prime Minister [Salam Fayyad](#), in creating a better environment for progress. The following is a brief list of some of the confidence building measure recently taken by [Israel](#) towards this end:

1. Releasing Withheld Tax and Customs Revenues – About 1 Billion NIS (approx. \$250 million) have already been transferred to the [PA](#), and the remainder of the revenues, another 1 Billion NIS, will be transferred by the end of the year. [Israel](#) and the [PA](#) have established a mutually acceptable mechanism for transferring and monitoring these funds, to prevent their use by [terrorist organizations](#).

2. Promoting Palestinian Development:

- Promotion of Sewage Project with World Bank in [Gaza](#), now underway in Beit Lahia, and serving the Northern [Gaza strip](#)

- [MASHAV](#) Projects – More than 230 Palestinian Trainees in such fields as Public Health, Small Business, Agriculture, Import/Export, Educational Planning and Empowerment of Women and Youth

3. Security-related Measures:

- Easing of Movement – 25 roadblocks and checkpoints were removed in the [West Bank](#)

- Amnesty of Wanted Terrorists – About 170 wanted [Fatah](#) terrorists were offered amnesty in exchange for renunciation of terrorism and surrendering of weapons.

- Prisoner Release – About 350 prisoners were released in two phases (20 July and 1 October) with a third phase now being contemplated.

- Provisions for [PA](#) Security Forces – Israel recently consented to the transfer of supplies and equipment to the [PA](#) Security Forces, above and beyond that called for in the Israel-Palestinian agreements.

- Palestinian Security Force Deployment – [PA](#) security forces, with [Israel's](#) consent, have just been redeployed in [Nablus](#) (the largest [West Bank](#) city), and other cities are being considered for further redeployments.

4. Re-convening the Bilateral Committees established in the [Oslo Accords](#), in order to address the ongoing needs of the [Palestinian Authority](#):

- Health, Tourism and Agriculture Committees already working

- Legal Committee and Joint Economic Committee (established by the [Paris Accord](#)) to begin working soon

5. Expanding Economic Cooperation:

- Meetings of Business Community Leaders – Lately Israel has facilitated and supported several meetings between Israeli and Palestinian business community which have taken place under various non-governmental auspices. For example, the Israeli Manufacturers Association has conducted a high level forum with Palestinian counterparts, and the Portland Fund has initiated the establishment of an Israeli-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce.

- Promotion of Economic Projects with International Partners - Turkey's Industrial Zone Project in Tarqumieh and Japan's 'Corridor of Peace' Project in [Jericho](#) are two such projects

It is [Israel's](#) hope that these measure, and others that will be taken in the near future, will help create and support an atmosphere conducive to progress in the renewed peace-making process - both in the negotiating room and in [Palestinian public sentiment](#).

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Source: [Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)

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