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Contact: Josh Block jblock@aipac.org

AIPAC APPLAUDS START OF DIRECT PEACE TALKS

**Calls on Palestinians, Arab States to Match Israel's
Commitment to Peace, Unconditional Talks**

AIPAC applauds the renewal of direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), and expresses its appreciation to the Obama administration for its efforts in making this goal a reality.

Sitting together, face-to-face, leader-to-leader in direct negotiations—without preconditions—is the only path to achieving the ultimate goal of peace, reconciliation and the end of all claims. AIPAC shares the hopes that the direct talks launched today in Washington will serve as a step toward fulfilling Israel's historic unrelenting quest for peace with the Palestinians and all its Arab neighbors.

For over six decades, Israel has consistently offered its hand in peace, demonstrating again and again its willingness to make real and heartrending sacrifices – altering borders, relinquishing territory, uprooting families and entire communities – in the pursuit of peace.

At the launch of today's talks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated Israel's unwavering commitment to the negotiations and to remain engaged in the process, despite a pair of deadly Palestinian terrorist attacks in the West Bank this week, which killed four Israeli civilians and injured another two.

"Together we can lead our people to a historic future that can put an end to claims and to conflict," [Netanyahu](#) told Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the opening of the talks in Washington.

For talks to succeed the PA must match Israel's commitment to conducting peace talks without preconditions or excuses, abandon its longstanding attempts to avoid making difficult choices at the negotiating table and cease incitement against Israel at home and abroad.

Arab states must provide the political support for the Palestinians to stay in the talks and make the kind of significant and difficult choices that will be required. They must also demonstrate their own commitment to peace by heeding the calls by the Obama administration and Congress to take immediate and meaningful steps toward normalization with Israel.

In launching the talks, Secretary of State Hillary [Clinton](#) reinforced America's position that it is up to the parties themselves to achieve a lasting peace.

"We cannot and we will not impose a solution," Clinton said. "Only you can make the decision necessary to reach an agreement for the Israeli and Palestinian people."

In recent months, Israel's prime minister has reaffirmed the Jewish state's commitment to peace, making tangible risks for peace and taking dramatic steps to improve the everyday lives of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank. As President Obama stated, "I believe that Prime Minister Netanyahu wants peace. I think he's willing to take risks for peace."

Now it is time – well past time – for the Palestinians and the Arab States to grasp Israel's outstretched hand and to match the Jewish state's unyielding commitment to peace with actions of their own.

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