

UN calls for negotiated two-state solution in Middle East

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New York (dpa) - The United Nations on Thursday called for a "meaningful political initiative" that could lead to a negotiated two-state solution that would help settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, **Robert Serry**, told the UN Security Council that the Palestinian Authority is gathering momentum for a state-building agenda by September.

"There is now a unity process in its infancy," Serry said.

Serry's remarks to the council in New York coincided with US President Barack Obama's speech in Washington on the situation in the Middle East and Africa. Obama warned the Palestinians against making a unilateral declaration of statehood, which they have openly planned to carry out during the upcoming UN General Assembly in September.

With September just around the corner, Serry called for a political initiative to pull together the dynamics currently in play and working together toward one objective: "a negotiated two-state solution."

"In the absence of an initiative, it is too early to assess whether September will bring a new and more effective paradigm for resolving the conflict through negotiations, or renewed confrontation between the parties in the diplomatic arena or on the ground," Serry said.

Serry said, "We strongly agree with President Obama that it is more vital than ever to solve this conflict."

He said the UN was also waiting for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's planned address to US Congress in Washington next week to see whether an initiative will be announced to break the logjam in the Middle East peace process.

More than 100 countries have so far supported the Palestinian statehood and Palestinian officials said they would try to advance the issue during the General Assembly annual session in September.

The UN, the European Union, the United States and Russia - the so-called diplomatic quartet on the Middle East peace process - have called for a two-state solution, in which a Palestinian state will live in peace next to Israel.

dpa tn pr Author: JT Nguyen