



Déclaration du Conseiller fédéral Ignazio Cassis

Rencontre officielle avec le ministre israélien des Affaires étrangères,
Gabi Ashkenazi

Jérusalem, le 29.11.2020

It is my great pleasure to be in Israel and to meet you Gabi. Thank you for making this visit possible in spite of the pandemic. Israel is the first country I am visiting in the region since the Swiss government adopted Mid-October a MENA strategy for the years 21-24. It illustrates Switzerland's strong commitment towards peace and dialogue in the region and our willingness to strengthen our bilateral relations with Israel. I will continue my trip to Ramallah and to the UAE.

Today, I congratulated Minister Ashkenazi on the normalization of Israel's relations with the UAE, Bahrein and Soudan. I shared my hope these will contribute to reduce regional tensions and I encourage all the parties to work harder for a lasting peace in the region. I will convey the same message in the UAE tomorrow.

I also expressed my relief that the annexation project has been suspended and Switzerland's expectation that this suspension will be permanent. Some of the latest developments give me reasons to be optimistic. Indeed, the resumption of administrative and security coordination with the Palestinian Authority is a good news. But I hope it is only a first step in the direction of resuming a dialogue and in giving diplomacy a chance.

Switzerland remains committed to a two-state solution. I told Minister Ashkenazi that Switzerland is ready to facilitate the resumption of dialogue and to offer its good offices. I will also convey this message in Ramallah later today.

Minister Ashkenazi and I also reviewed our bilateral relations. Switzerland and Israel are leaders in the field of innovation and new technologies, and we have established a cooperation in those areas. Now, Swiss companies, start-ups and universities are

visiting Israel and are developing collaborations with Israeli companies and academic institutions. We are also exploring joint projects in the field of environment and climate. Both of us see this as a way to invest in the future of the region and a contribution to the sustainability goals of Agenda 2030.

Thank you for your hospitality Gabi and for your openness to discuss all the topics. Please be assured of my commitment to the friendship between our two countries.