

Tony Blair: Governments Have Three Years to Deliver Progress or Face Popular Backlash

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[Arabic](#)

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- Translating political changes into improvements in people ' s lives is the big challenge for governments
- Elections are central to democracy and people must accept the outcomes
- The Israeli-Palestinian issue remains central to regional stability
- More information about the Meeting here: <http://www.weforum.org/MiddleEast2011>

Dead Sea, Jordan, 23 October 2011 – Translating the political changes of the Arab Spring into improvements in people ' s lives is the greatest challenge facing governments in the region today. “ Unless ordinary people see tangible progress over the next three years, there will be a huge popular backlash, ” said Tony Blair, UN Middle East Quartet Representative, speaking on a panel about geopolitical trends at the World Economic Forum Special Meeting on Economic Growth and Job Creation in the Arab World, held at the Dead Sea, Jordan.

Blair ' s sense of urgency was shared by former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Amre Moussa, who endorses proposals for a major international effort to support reform in the region and emphasized that such an effort must be designed to meet the particular needs of states emerging from the upheavals of the past year. Nasser Sami Judeh, who recently stepped down as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan, underscored the urgency: “ Young people across the region have fought for change with their blood; we must find ways to meet their aspirations without more violence, ” he said.

One of the main demands of the Arab street is that its voice be heard and heeded. “ People everywhere want to participate in decisions that affect their destiny and we should not expect things to be different in the Arab world, ” said Barham Salih, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq. Building a participatory system takes time, however. “ Democracy is not just about voting, it is an attitude of mind that took centuries to evolve in the UK and cannot be achieved in a few weeks or even a few years, ” said Blair. “ Elections are central and people must accept the outcomes, ” added Moussa.

As people in the Arab world strive for justice within their own societies, a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue remains central to regional stability. Moussa reiterated his government ' s commitment to finding a solution. “ Peace between Israelis and Palestinians remains the foundation of our foreign policy, ” he said. For Blair, the Arab Spring offers an opportunity to put the peace process on a more stable path: “ It alters the positions of all sides and, in doing so, gives us a chance to make progress. ” Failure to do so will further complicate the regional picture, he added.

The Co-Chairs of the Special Meeting are: Mohammed H. Al Mady, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), Saudi Arabia; Yasmin Galal, Global Shaper, Cairo Hub, Egypt; Habib Haddad, Chief Executive Officer, Wamda, United Arab Emirates, a Young Global Leader; Muhtar A. Kent, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, The Coca-Cola Company, USA; Maurice Lévy , Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Publicis Groupe, France, a Member of the Foundation Board of the World Economic Forum; and Soraya Salti, Senior Vice-President, Middle East and North Africa, INJAZ Al Arab – JA Worldwide, Jordan, a Social Entrepreneur

Jordanian Radio and Television (JRTV) is the Host Broadcaster of this Meeting.

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