

Peace and dignity in the Middle East

European Parliament resolution on peace and dignity in the Middle East (2002/2166(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 11 to 18, 21, 23, 27 and 28 of the EU Treaty, and the work of the European Convention relating to external action,
 - having regard to the roadmap containing the peace plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict drawn up on 20 December 2002 by the Quartet (the US, the UN, the Russian Federation and the European Union) and submitted on 30 April 2003¹,
 - having regard to United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978), 1373 (2001) and 1397 (2002),
 - having regard to its recommendation to the Council of 13 December 2001 on the crisis in the Middle East and the role of the European Union in the region², and its resolutions of 10 April³, 7 February 2002⁴ and 20 January 2000⁵ on the situation in the Middle East, as well as its resolutions of 20 March⁶ and 4 July 2002⁷ on the results of the European Councils held in Barcelona and Seville on 15 and 16 March and 21 and 22 June 2002 respectively,
 - having regard to the final declarations of the first, second and third Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary fora held in Brussels on 27 and 28 October 1998, 8 and 9 February 2001 and 8 November 2001 respectively and the final declaration of the fourth forum held in Bari on 17 and 18 June 2002,
 - having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy (A5-0351/2003),
- A. whereas the time has come to end the violence and widespread terror that has existed in the region since well before the launch of the United Nations partition plan in 1947 and the founding of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948,

¹ <http://www.un.org/media/main/roadmap122002.html>

² OJ C 177 E, 25.7.2002, p. 277.

³ OJ C 127 E, 29.5.2003, p. 584.

⁴ OJ C 284 E, 21.11.2002, p. 312.

⁵ OJ C 304, 24.10.2000, p. 202.

⁶ OJ C 47 E, 27.2.2003, p. 629.

⁷ P5_TA(2002)0365.

- B. whereas solutions based on force and the imposition of prior conditions have all too clearly shown their limitations and have been preventing a negotiated settlement of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians for decades,
- C. whereas the world can no longer tolerate the continuation of a conflict which has already given rise to seven wars in 50 years (the Arab-Israeli War in 1948; the Sinai War of 1956; the Six-Day War of 1967; the War of Attrition of 1969-1970; Black September in Jordan, 1970; the Yom-Kippur War of 1973; and the Lebanon War of 1982) and which has resulted in countless victims and material damage, and whereas it is therefore vital to find a peaceful solution to the conflict,
- D. whereas it is vital to find a solution to a conflict which has already generated more negotiations, conferences and mediation than any other contemporary conflict, including the Cyprus Armistice of 1949; the Gunnar Jarring negotiating mission and the William Rogers peace plan in 1967-1970; the mediation by Henry Kissinger in 1973-1974; the Geneva Peace Conference project in 1976-1977; the Camp David Conference and Agreements (1977-1978); the Madrid Peace Conference (1991) and its eleven subsequent negotiating sessions up to 1993; the Oslo negotiations (1993); the Israeli-Palestinian Washington Agreements (1993 and 1995); and the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in Taba, Cairo, Hebron, Wye Plantation, Sharm el Sheik, Camp David, Taba, etc. between 1993 and 2001,
- E. whereas an opportunity now exists for the European Union to contribute to renewed peace negotiations, following the publication on 30 April 2003 of the roadmap, and to endorse and support the 'People's Voice' initiative and 'Statement of Principles', launched by Professor Sari Nusseibeh and Mr Ami Ayalon, as presented to the members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy on 9 September 2003,
- F. whereas the roadmap must be implemented, whereas its objective is to secure a final and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by 2005 and whereas an essential aspect of the proper implementation of the roadmap is that its obligations should be carried out by both parties in parallel in order to secure a fair and just peace settlement between Israel and Palestine,
- G. whereas the full implementation of the Quartet's plan offers an incomparable opportunity for dialogue between cultures and religions to be strengthened, and for faith in a peaceful and stable future for the region's inhabitants to be restored,
- H. stressing that the Palestinian people have the right to choose democratically their leaders and that in the name of democracy the international community and the Israeli Government must accept the legitimacy of such a choice,
- I. whereas the current worrying situation in Iraq is another destabilising factor in the Middle East which makes a concrete prospect of peace between Israelis and Palestinians even more urgent and necessary,
- J. whereas the situation in Palestine is disastrous, given that, according to a recent World Bank report, after almost three years of Intifada 60% of Palestinians are living on less

than two US dollars a day, poverty has tripled and is now affecting more than two million people, and per capita consumption of foodstuffs has declined by 30%,

A peaceful and honourable solution to the current impasse in the Middle East

1. Commends the members of the Quartet on the publication on 30 April 2003 of the roadmap, and urges the parties to the conflict to explicitly accept the plan and apply it immediately, unconditionally and simultaneously, without reservations, amendments or objections that would disable it or substantially alter its ideas or nature;
2. Regrets that the positive developments begun since 30 April in the Middle East, particularly the resumption of talks between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, have come to a halt and violent confrontations have resumed; expresses its solidarity with the Israeli and Palestinian families of all victims of violence; urges both parties to resume the dialogue as soon as possible and to commit themselves to implementing the roadmap and, with that in view, to take the following measures immediately:
 - the Palestine National Authority: to provide clear and firm support for the new government in its task of reorganising the security forces; to restore public order and make tangible and visible efforts to dismantle terrorist organisations; to carry out the reforms already announced and, as far as possible, to hold free and transparent elections;
 - the Israeli Government: to withdraw its army from the autonomous territories, end targeted killings, and freeze all settlement activity and the building of the security wall;
3. Declares once again that there can be no military solution to the Middle East conflict and advocates as the only possible option the negotiation of a firm and final peace agreement, without prior conditions and in line with the three phases of the roadmap, based on the existence of two democratic, sovereign and viable states – Israel and Palestine – coexisting peacefully within secure and recognised frontiers and within which the peaceful co-existence of Christians, Muslims and Jews is guaranteed;
4. Commends the Palestinian Authority for having already publicly and unconditionally accepted the roadmap and the obligations the Authority must meet under its terms; in view of this situation, calls on the two parties to the conflict not to declare the peace process dead and immediately to resume and continue the measures that both sides have begun to implement in the context of the roadmap;
5. Welcomes the Israeli Government's acceptance of the planned phases of the roadmap, although this decision was subject to reservations and conditions; trusts that the necessary steps will be taken to ensure progress towards complying with the provisions contained in the roadmap, including the obligations the State of Israel must meet under its terms and stresses that the benefits of securing the firm and final peace agreement provided for in the roadmap will include universal recognition by Arab states, the launch of full diplomatic and trade relations and an end to insecurity;

6. Calls for strong and generous support from the international community for the main parties to the conflict to help them launch the peace process, given their inability to do so on their own; considers that this support should now more than ever be channelled through the efforts and initiatives of the Quartet;
7. Notes that the active involvement of the international community and diplomatic pressure have helped to secure significant reforms by the Palestinian National Authority, facilitating the implementation of the roadmap; therefore advocates that similar efforts be made with both parties to help them meet their obligations under the roadmap;
8. Notes with concern that it has not been possible to secure a climate of mutual trust between the parties and that in recent weeks the enemies of peace have created countless barriers and pretexts aimed at making the roadmap unviable;
9. Rejects, emphatically, the anti-Semitic statements made by the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed to a meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference;
10. Calls on the Quartet, particularly the European Union and the United States, to bring all their political influence and will to bear to compel those still opposed to the process to take decisive steps towards peace through the method described in the roadmap, as advocated by the European Union and by this resolution;
11. Notes that the Quartet is an informal body consisting of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia and that these four parties took part in the drawing up of the roadmap in response to a European initiative;
12. Suggests therefore that the four members should agree on what tasks each should perform with regard to the mechanisms provided for in the roadmap, including monitoring;
13. Considers that, in order to implement the roadmap properly, the members of the Quartet must coordinate their diplomatic activity and that any attempts at parallel diplomacy within the Quartet or any of its four members would clearly jeopardise the peace plan;
14. Considers that the joint efforts to implement the roadmap offer an unprecedented opportunity to give genuine fresh impetus to the transatlantic partnership between the European Union and the United States and to reaffirm the special relationship bringing the Union together with Russia and other neighbouring states in the context of a 'wider Europe', while also testifying to the unswerving commitment of the Union as a civil power to resolving conflicts by means of diplomacy, peaceful solutions and multilateral institutions;
15. Welcomes the signing of the so-called 'Geneva Accord' between an important group of Israeli and Palestinian politicians and intellectuals; calls on the Council and the Commission to be consistent and to firmly support the abovementioned initiative, as well as other initiatives by movements in the two communities which genuinely strive for peace;
16. Calls for the European Union to be much more closely involved in mediation of the conflict through all means at its disposal and in particular:

- adoption by the European Council of a clear and firm common position;
- greater intervention and direct action by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the special representative for the region;

All these measures are designed to overcome the current situation, which is damaging to both parties;

17. Expresses its gratitude to Miguel Angel Moratinos for the remarkable work he has performed for the past seven years as EU Special Representative to the Middle East and deeply regrets that he did not receive the appropriate political support to develop a real European policy in the region;

Peace, dignity and security as the foundations for a better future in the Middle East

18. Considers it vital for continuous and decisive progress to be made in the negotiations as the only way of preventing the most extreme factions on both sides from perpetually holding the peace process hostage, so that all attempts to halt the peace process by fresh terrorist actions will be in vain, although the fight against terrorism must nevertheless be pursued simultaneously;
19. Reiterates that it firmly condemns and rejects all acts of terrorism committed by Palestinian terrorist organisations against the Israeli people and demands that the Palestinian Authority spare no effort in combating such acts, culminating in the total dismantling of such organisations; calls on the Palestinians to comply with their commitments in the Oslo agreements to completely and unconditionally withdraw from all forms of violence, and return to political dialogue as the only way of achieving peace;
20. Reiterates that it firmly condemns all acts of terrorism and military repression against civilians and the excessive use of military force by Israel against the Palestinian people, together with Israel's policy of extrajudicial killings and kidnappings, which must be ended immediately;
21. Reaffirms its strongest condemnation of all terrorist attacks, and of the organisations that plan and execute them;
22. States explicitly that Palestinian terrorism, regardless of whether its victims are civilians or in the military, not only claims many innocent victims and should therefore be utterly condemned, but also seriously jeopardises the desired resumption of the peace process; insists, however, that the peace process must not be suspended or broken off as a result of terrorism, because for the terrorists that would be the greatest possible success;
23. Condemns in the strongest terms the appalling terrorist attack carried out near the Erez border crossing in the Gaza Strip on 15 October 2003 in which three US citizens were killed, and extends its condolences to the families of the victims; expects to see the perpetrators of the attack brought to justice;
24. Considers also that, if the Israeli Government wishes to contribute to this peace process, it must refrain from practices which also result in civilian victims among the Palestinians and which, by the same token, obstruct the peace process;

25. Regrets the Israeli air raid on Syrian territory on 5 October 2003, which is a violation of international law and has escalated and exacerbated the crisis in the region;
26. Firmly believes in Israel's legitimate and unquestionable right to defend its citizens and its security, and affirms that in exercising that right the confines of the rule of law and the rights of Palestinian citizens must be taken into account, avoiding any practices that could endanger the lives of civilians and that at the same time involve a worsening of the economic situation in the territories;
27. Expresses, in this regard, its solidarity with the group of Israeli Air Force pilots who declared they would refuse to fly missions that could endanger civilians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, on the basis that airstrikes are immoral and illegal on account of the fact that they kill innocent civilians;
28. Welcomes the Council's decision to include the political wing of the radical Islamic Hamas movement in the category of terrorist organisation and add it to the EU list of terrorist bodies;
29. Considers that the legitimate use of force is the responsibility of a single institutional authority and hopes that this principle will be implemented quickly; likewise asks the Prime Minister to make all efforts to prevent terrorism and urges the Palestinian Authority to do everything in its power to enable him to perform his duties;
30. Commends the fact that, even before publication of the roadmap on 30 April 2003, the Palestinian Authority had embarked on some of the institutional reforms called for by the Quartet and by Israel, such as reform of the Palestinian Ministry for Finance, and the creation of the post of prime minister; at the same time regrets that the Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas, who had been appointed with the full support of all Palestine's institutions, including the Legislative Council, has resigned; calls on the Palestinian Authority to pursue these reforms and urges it to do everything in its power to enable the Prime Minister to perform his duties; states its intention to invite the Palestinian Prime Minister to appear at a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee as soon as possible;
31. Calls on Israel to help facilitate as far as possible the enormous and highly difficult task facing the Palestinian Prime Minister in seeking to achieve the objectives set out in the roadmap, since, only if he enjoys broad popular support among the Palestinian people, prompted by a clear sense that the political prospects for a fair, honourable and lasting peace exist, will the new Prime Minister be able to achieve these objectives and avert the clear danger that failure of the roadmap would result in an unstoppable rise of fundamentalist extremists;
32. Calls on the Quartet, and in particular the European Union institutions, to provide the effective, neutral and objective technical assistance which the competent Palestinian institutions may require in drawing up their draft Constitution;
33. Points out once again that PNA President, Yasser Arafat, was democratically elected in January 1996 in elections deemed to be fair by international observers, including those from the EU, and reiterates that the Palestinian people are entitled to elect their leaders

themselves; regrets, however, the fact that once again the new Prime Minister is not being given the necessary support and apparently sees no option but to resign;

34. Considers therefore that the policy of isolating President Arafat is not beneficial to the peace process and calls on President Arafat, for his part, to come out in favour of the roadmap and his active participation in implementing it; is shocked by the decision to expel the legitimate, democratically elected Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, opposes any attempt to deport or banish him and, needless to say, condemns any suggestion that he should be physically eliminated, and any attempt to do so;
35. Urges the PNA to call free, direct and transparent elections in due course to produce new institutions that are more open, transparent and democratic and whose main tasks should include drawing up the draft Constitution for Palestine provided for in Phase I of the roadmap and organising the institutional framework of the future Palestinian state; considers, however, that elections cannot contribute to peace unless the peace-loving Palestinian movements can with the Quartet's support first show some success from their policy;
36. Commends the Commission for having already made provision for funds for the holding of future elections in Palestine;
37. Urges the Israeli Government to lift the blockade of Palestinian territories and organise an immediate withdrawal behind the lines existing in September 2000;
38. Calls on the Israeli Government to press ahead with the measures required to end settlement activity, including natural growth of settlements;
39. Shares the deep concern expressed by the Council at the continuation of illegal settlements and expropriation of land for the construction of the security fence, which represent a barrier to a peace settlement, since they threaten to make it physically impossible to devise a solution based on two states;
40. Calls on the Israeli Government and all political forces in the country to refuse to authorise any funding for new settlements;
41. Points out that, according to the United Nations, the so-called 'security fence' represents a de facto annexation and is illegal under international law and that, according to information from the United Nations, the barrier initially planned by Israel would cut into 7 % of Palestinian territory in the West Bank; calls on Israel to give an undertaking that the security fence will not be prejudging the final border between Israel and the future Palestinian state;
42. Insists that the Israeli authorities adopt the measures necessary to unconditionally and immediately improve the humanitarian situation throughout the occupied territories; in particular calls on them to stop violating the principle of medical neutrality, and thus allow Palestinian health personnel to perform their duties fully;
43. Calls on the Commission to assess the humanitarian situation and financial needs, and examine how all the important development cooperation and humanitarian aid instruments available to the Union can be used from the outset of Phase I in the Middle

East, and in Palestine in particular, while requiring both parties to comply fully and strictly with the rules of international humanitarian law;

44. Expresses its deep concern at the plight of the Palestinian prisoners with regard, in particular, to those held under the administrative detention regime, which violates all the general principles of law; calls on the Israeli authorities to allow the defence to exercise its rights, which implies free access of the lawyer to detainees from the time of their arrest, and to ensure that minimum standards of detention are respected;
45. Insists that the governments of both parties and those of all Middle Eastern countries pursue a new educational policy based on the concept of 'education for peace' and designed to encourage tolerance and mutual understanding between different cultures and religions; urges the EU to support a process in which both Palestinian and Israeli school textbooks are revised or re-edited with the aim of removing hostile statements that foment hatred and rejection of the other nation and instead impart mutual tolerance and acceptance;
46. Calls on the Commission to extend all existing European Union programmes for schools, universities, professional training, cultural heritage, the information society and new technologies, communications and research and development to include the two parties concerned, as a way of providing genuine support for the concept of 'education for peace';
47. Firmly supports the activities undertaken jointly by Israelis and Palestinians as part of the 'People's Voice' campaign, which seeks to give powerful popular impetus to the search for peace and show the opposing sides that alternatives to violence do exist;
48. Calls on the Commission to support international civil society organisations which try to break through the societal polarisation that surrounds the Middle East conflict;
49. Believes it is vital that these formal declarations explicitly include mutual recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign, secure, democratic, viable and peaceful state, and the right of the State of Israel for its existence to be guaranteed within secure, recognised and respected borders;
50. Firmly supports the launch of Phase II of the roadmap as soon as fresh Palestinian elections have been held and stresses that Phase II can only culminate in the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with provisional frontiers by the deadline set;
51. Calls on the Quartet to convene an international conference on peace and dignity as soon as new elections have been held in Palestine; points out that the aim of this conference would be to launch the process of creating an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders;
52. Also supports the comprehensive and inclusive approach to this conference proposed by the roadmap, in the hope that it will make it possible to end not only the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also the conflicts between Israel and Lebanon and Israel and Syria;

53. Specifically points out that the roadmap is not an à la carte agreement and that it is therefore not possible to advocate the creation of a Palestinian state with provisional frontiers and then refuse to move on to the third phase, which requires final consolidation of the Palestinian state with fixed frontiers;
54. Points out that the conflict is not confined to the Israeli-Palestinian issue and that for peace to endure, it must be comprehensive; therefore, urges Israel and Syria to negotiate a peace agreement and to settle their differences once and for all in a peaceful and honourable manner through the negotiation of a bilateral peace agreement; also urges Israel and Lebanon to negotiate a firm and final peace treaty entailing the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from the country and enabling the Government of Lebanon to exercise sovereignty over its own territory;
55. Is convinced that this agreement can only secure a fair, honourable, full and lasting peace that will guarantee stability and security in the region if it is based on: international law and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly; a commitment from both parties to democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as well as transparency in the use of international aid; rejection of the use of force and all forms of violence; and the full and effective application of all agreements and undertakings previously signed by both parties;
56. Considers it vital that this agreement should be guaranteed by the members of the Quartet in their capacity as representatives of the international community as a whole;
57. Recommends to the parties that the new firm and final peace treaty should include a precise demarcation of the borders of the two new states on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242;
58. Recommends that the parties show the utmost flexibility in agreeing on the best way to carry out the total evacuation by Israel of existing settlements within Palestinian territory following the return by both parties to the frontier situation as it stood on the morning of 5 June 1967, where necessary by negotiating exchanges of territory or any other peaceful means of settlement;
59. Proposes to the Quartet and the parties to the conflict that the city of Jerusalem be declared a site of the cultural and religious heritage of mankind, the dual capital of Israel and the future new Palestinian state, with an international legal statute which does not provide for division of the city, based on a balanced and lasting solution which takes account of the rights of the Israelis, Palestinians and religious communities present in the city with the administration of areas originally having a Jewish majority assigned to the authorities of the State of Israel and the administration of areas originally having a Palestinian majority assigned to the authorities of the new Palestinian state, and with a consensus-based solution in place to govern custody and administration of the holy places of the world's three great monotheistic religions, securing and guaranteeing free access to them all;
60. Calls on the Palestinian authorities to take a realistic approach to the sensitive question of the right of return for refugees, which currently concerns some four and a half million people, so that a fair and balanced solution can be reached between the parties taking into account that not all Palestinian refugees will be able to return to their places of origin and

that due weight must also be given to Israel's demographic concerns, as already publicly recognised by President Arafat in February 2002;

61. Welcomes the efforts by several countries in the region to offer support to Palestinian refugees and calls in this connection for the Arab League and all Arab states involved to offer support to enable a consensus-based solution to be reached on this delicate issue affecting the entire region; calls on the States concerned to assess how they could enable those refugees who so desire to acquire nationality via residence in the countries in which they have taken refuge, including the frequent cases where nationality has been handed down from parents to children; calls on the authorities all of countries concerned to put an end to all discrimination concerning Palestinian refugees, facilitating their integration into their society;
62. Recommends, therefore, that the right of return for Palestinian refugees be confined to the Palestinian state, with exceptions that may be freely negotiated, and that the international fund for solidarity and economic aid referred to below should provide a generous and equitable system of compensation for those refugees not wishing to return or unable to do so because their place of origin is located outside of the Palestinian state;
63. Is convinced that it is vital for the new firm and final peace agreement to include provision for fair and equitable distribution so that all the region's water resources can be exploited for the benefit of all the countries there, in order to resolve this matter once and for all and avert the risk of future conflicts;
64. Believes that the parties should not be left to resolve this conflict unaided and calls for an increased international presence in the area to help them implement the roadmap and also to establish any instances of non-compliance by either side; to this end, proposes to send, at the appropriate time and subject to the agreement of the parties, an international force to the region, to be organised by the Quartet and under the auspices of the United Nations, with sufficient and credible resources to be able to verify and monitor at all times actual progress made and, subsequently, provide both sides with guarantees that the terms of the firm and final peace agreement will be observed;

Reconstruction of the region and sharing the peace dividend

65. Proposes that an international fund for solidarity and economic assistance be immediately set up to tackle specific problems from the outset of Phase I, helping both populations directly, and including the reconstruction of the economic and social fabric of the Middle East and of Palestine and, in the medium term, the promotion of democracy, economic development and social justice in the Arab world as a whole;
66. Hopes that the international community will provide a generous and decisive financial contribution to enable the fund to meet its objectives and thereby generate a peace dividend from which Palestinians, Israelis and the international community as a whole will benefit, given that the promotion of democracy, development and social justice throughout the Arab world will result in greater security and prosperity for everyone;

67. Welcomes President Bush's proposal to create a free trade area between the United States and the Arab countries and urges the Council and the Commission to proceed with the further development and implementation of a 'wider Europe';
68. Is convinced that the deadlock of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the main obstacle to the full development of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership; calls, in this respect, on the Council and the Commission to start putting in place all the necessary measures so as to relaunch and revitalise the Barcelona process;
69. Proposes that Israel and the new Palestinian state be immediately included within the geopolitical framework of the 'concept of proximity' developed by the EU, as soon as the firm and final peace treaty has been signed, so that by 2005 at the latest the Union will be sharing with both partners 'everything but institutions' and, specifically, a single market, free trade, an open investment system, approximation of laws, interconnection of networks, use of the euro and close cooperation in the fight against crime, terrorism and illegal immigration;
70. Calls also for the MEDA regional programme to be used from the outset of Phase 1 and on a broad scale in order to fund projects in the Middle East designed to examine how an EU-Israel-Palestine partnership could be established that would be stronger than the existing one, while encouraging regional cooperation;
71. Urges the Commission and Council to monitor and carefully apply all clauses of the existing association agreements with Israel and the Palestinian National Authority;
72. Recommends that, if the roadmap breaks down in the immediate future and, given the extremely serious consequences this would have in the form of further suffering by Israelis and Palestinians, new options should be put in place, notably the establishment, under the authority of the Quartet, of an international mandate in Palestine, including an international force on the ground;

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73. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government and Parliament of Israel, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, the Palestinian Legislative Council, the President and Congress of the United States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President and Parliament of the Russian Federation and the Secretary-General of the Arab League.