

# Timing mediation initiatives

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One of the factors that help in the identification when the mediation is necessary is when a stalemate exists. A stalemate would exist if both parties to a conflict are unable to agree on any issue presented to them. However, they would not immediately mediate, unless they are getting hurt by the stalemate under consideration (Zartman & De Soto, 2010). During a conflict, a stalemate may exist if one party tries to force its way out through either a military or an economic means, but unable to move out of the situation. An example is in 2008 in the war between Israel and Hamas, where neither party could overcome one another, hence the need of secret negotiations for purposes of stopping the war (Zartman & De Soto, 2010).

This was a stalemate, and hence it is a proof that when it occurs, then the time is ripe for mediation. In determining a stalemate, and making a decision on whether it is ripe for mediation, there is a need of assessing the costs of the conflict, and analyzing the losses that both parties have suffered (Zartman & De Soto, 2010). If the organizations have suffered numerous losses, and the costs of maintaining the conflict is becoming expensive, then this is the right time of mediation. Furthermore, there is a need of looking if there are changes in the leadership of an organization. If these changes occur, chances are high that the new leadership would embrace peace, and hence there is a need of starting the process of mediation (Zartman & De Soto, 2010). An example is the end of the 1992 war between Israel and Palestine, with the emergence of a new leader, Itzak Rabin.

It is important to explain that if a new leadership that does not embrace dialogue and reconciliation come to power, chances are high that the mediation efforts would fail. For instance, the emergence of Tassos

Papadopoulos as the Greek leader of the Cypriots was able to reduce any chances of a peaceful settlement between the Greek Cypriots, and the Turkish Cypriots (Zartman & De Soto, 2010). Subjective indicators also play a role in determining whether a conflict is ripe of mediation or not. This includes the utterances of influential leaders within the parties to a conflict. This is because these leaders have the capability of influencing the party leadership into entering into a negotiation or not.

#### References:

Zartman, L., & De Soto, A. (2010). *Timing Mediation Initiatives*. Washington: Washington Institute of Peace.