

**Palestine Liberation Organization  
Executive Committee**

**September 9, 2015**

**Statement by Dr. Saeb Erekat, Secretary General of the  
PLO Executive Committee on UN Vote regarding raising  
the flags of non-member states, including the State of  
Palestine.**

“We call upon the international community to support the initiative to raise the flags of non-member states at the United Nations. By doing so, the world will be sending a strong message of support to the realization of the two-state vision and in honoring the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

While we know that this step by its own will not end the Israeli occupation, it will contribute to the efforts aimed at both the attainment of peace and the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people.

We understand that Israel is opposing this initiative and is mobilizing its allies at the United Nations to block it. The government of the occupying power rejects the initiative simply because it does not believe in ending the occupation, but prefers the maintenance of the current status-quo by which Palestinians are placed under a separate and unequal system and where the build-up of Israeli settlements and the transfer of Israel's civilian population into the occupied territories continues unabated.

We call upon the UN members to send a clear message of support by backing our non-violent diplomatic steps in the hope of getting closer to attaining both peace and our right to self-determination.”

### **End of the Statement**

To access a fact sheet with Questions and Answers on the initiative please go to: <http://nad-plo.org/etemplate.php?id=577>

**State of Palestine  
Palestine Liberation Organization  
Negotiations Affairs Department**

### **Raising the Flag of Palestine at the United Nations Questions & Answers**

#### **Why is Palestine requesting to raise its flag?**

Palestine has turned to the international community in order to peacefully regain its inalienable rights, as recognized by the United Nations. One of such steps was the overwhelming recognition of the State of Palestine by the General Assembly on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2012 (Resolution 67/19). A few months after resolution 67/19 was approved, Palestine requested that its flag to be raised in the organization. Now, after almost three years, we are asking the General Assembly to make a decision on the matter.

The State of Palestine has been recognized by 136 nations representing more than 80% of the world's population. For Palestine this is a positive step that will not only reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a state of their own, but will also provide hope to the Palestinian people at a moment where the lack of international will and Israel's culture of impunity are slowly ending the hope for a just and lasting peace.

Moreover, we see this as an overdue right for the Palestinian people. We also seek to boost the moral and hope of our people, at the backdrop of lack of action and political will by the international community. Palestine seeks to continue advancing towards independence through non-violent means. While this step will not bring to an end Israeli occupation, it will definitely contribute to efforts aimed at honoring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

### **Isn't it a symbolic step?**

Yes it is. These symbolic steps build upon other steps which aim to consolidate the fact that Palestine is recognized as a state by the International Community, that the Palestinian people are entitled to their right to self-determination, and that the United Nations and its member countries are committed to materializing that right.

### **Does raising the flag for a nonmember state violate UN regulations and practices?**

No. There is nothing at the UN Charter denying the right of non-member states to raise their flag. In fact, the UN Charter doesn't refer to "observer states." This is a formula that has developed in UN practice starting in the 1950's. Several nations at the time, such as Japan and Jordan were granted that status as their attempts to become full members of the UN were blocked by a permanent member of the Security Council.

At the same time, Palestine does not consider this step as an attempt to bypass the Security Council or replace its bid to become a full member state of the UN.

The State of Palestine is a responsible international actor that participates in most of UN activities, has joined dozens of international organizations and treaties. There is nothing illegal about our request.

### **Is the Holy See, the other non-member state, against this initiative?**

No. The Holy See has recognized the State of Palestine and has publicly stated that it does not oppose the Palestinian initiative.

### **Why is Israel opposing this step?**

Israel is opposing this step because in practice it does not believe in the two-state solution. Rather, its policies on the ground are aimed at maintaining control over Palestinian territory, expanding illegal settlements, while imposing two different normative systems, one based on denial of rights for Palestinians and the other based on extending full Israeli citizenship rights to settlers (Apartheid).

By raising the Palestinian flag at the United Nations, the organization will be reaffirming its full support for the Palestinian people right to self-determination in an independent state of their own, while rejecting the continuation of Israel's belligerent occupation and the policies that take us further away from peace. Israel is against this step, because it simply does not foresee the rise of a Palestinian state that lives side by side with it.