

*Permanent Observer Mission
of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

(Check against delivery)

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas

President of the State of Palestine

Chairman of the Executive Committee of

the Palestine Liberation Organization

on the occasion of

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

23 November 2015

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the United Nations General Assembly,

H.E. Mr. Matthew Rycroft, President of the Security Council,

H.E. Mr. Fodé Seck, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to convey to you greetings from the State of Palestine and the Palestinian people to all of our friends around the world participating in the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We commemorate this occasion, two months after we all participated in the momentous ceremony that took place in the Rose Garden at the United Nations to raise the flag of the State of Palestine. We are proud that, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and in other UN offices, the flag of the State of Palestine is flying alongside the flags of the countries of the world

I extend our profound appreciation and gratitude to the countries that have recognized the State of Palestine and to all the countries that extend their support of the just cause of our people by voting positively at the United Nations and in international forums on the many important resolutions regarding the question of Palestine, including in favor of Palestine's status at the United Nations and the raising of its flag. We are also grateful their unwavering support for the efforts to achieve a just peace in our region and in the world.

Today, we also renew our gratitude to non-governmental organizations and civil society, and to all our brothers, sisters, friends and all freedom and peace-loving peoples around the world who continue to steadfastly stand by our people. We are grateful for their solidarity and support of the rights and legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people, including for achievement of their freedom and independence, and the realization of a just and lasting peace.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its inception, the United Nations has defended our cause, placing it as a priority on the agenda of the international community. The United Nations has extended a helping hand to our people, and has legislated resolutions and recommendations that constitute the foundations that cannot be bypassed in the search for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution. We reaffirm here the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine, which

must be upheld until this question is satisfactorily resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and the principles of justice.

In this connection, we express our deep appreciation for the efforts exerted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the efforts exerted by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chair, H.E. Ambassador Mr. Fodé Seck of Senegal, as well as the Bureau, and all Members and Observers of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations system as a whole, foremost UNRWA and the many agencies assisting the Palestinian people and exerting serious efforts in support of their rights and a just, lasting peace.

The General Assembly, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the International Court of Justice, have adopted strong and principled resolutions in favor of our just cause. We must reiterate our deep regret about the lack of implementation of these resolutions, which has compounded the conflict over the many decades and inflicted grave hardships on the Palestinian people. Indeed, this failure to uphold the law and implement these resolutions has resulted in the continued denial of their rights and has deepened convictions that there is indeed a double standard when it comes to resolutions regarding Israel, which are not implemented and allow Israel to continue behaving as though it is a State above the law, with complete impunity and with grave consequences.

The continuation of the Israeli occupation and its persistence with colonial settlement activities, cruel arrests and detention of civilians, extrajudicial killings of our youth and children, the blockade of Gaza, home demolitions, repeated brutal attacks by Israeli terrorist settlers against our people and their property, and provocations and incitement against their holy places, including the Holy Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Occupied East Jerusalem, affirm Israel's arrogance and intransigence, its violations of international law, its rejection of peace and its adherence instead to the ideology of colonial expansion, subjugation and greed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past years, I have cautioned of the grave consequences of what is happening in and around Jerusalem, including severe restrictions imposed on our people, violations of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and the attempts to change the identity, historical and demographic character of Jerusalem. This is in addition to the violations committed by the settlers and extremists under the protection of the Israeli occupying forces against the sanctity of Christian and Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, particularly aimed at changing the historic status quo at Al-Haram Al-Sharif and Al-Aqsa Mosque that existed before the year 1967 and thereafter. All of these actions and violations would risk turning the conflict from a political and legal one to a religious conflict, which will have disastrous consequences for everyone. We will not accept this.

All illegal Israeli colonial settlement activities must be stopped. All illegal Israeli actions and measures aimed at Judaization of East Jerusalem and at altering or eliminating the Palestinian Christian and Muslim presence in and the identity of the Holy City must be halted. This includes all Israeli attempts to establish temporal and spatial presence at Al-Aqsa Mosque and Al-Haram Al-Sharif. All acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by Israeli settlers against the Palestinian civilian population must also be stopped.

I reiterate once again that the events happening in our country are the result of diminishing hopes, the continued situation of strangulation, siege and pressure, and the lack of sense of security and safety felt by our people. All of these are factors generate tremendous frustration. The angry uprising of our people and the successive events of the recent period are an inevitable result of what we have cautioned about. As we have stated before, they stem from Israel's incessant violations and crimes against the Palestinian people, their rights and their land, violations and crimes that continue as the international community continues to fail to rectify the injustice that has befallen our people and to end their suffering, especially our youth, whose hopes and beliefs in the future are diminishing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We once again reiterate the urgent need for efforts to expand and intensify international engagement to achieve peace. This includes the adoption of a resolution by the Security Council, which would include clear parameters to achieve peace on the basis of the two-State solution, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and would set a timeframe for ending the Israeli occupation. It is not logical to waste time in negotiations for the sake of negotiations; it is urgent to act now to salvage the prospects for peace.

You all are aware that peace is our desired goal, and that is what we are seeking to achieve with full determination, resolve and sincere will. We continue to give one opportunity after the other to achieve this goal. Many rounds of negotiations have been wasted by successive Israeli governments, which rendered the negotiations useless just to gain more time in order to build more colonial settlements and its apartheid, annexation wall on our land, to steal our natural resources, and to impose new facts on the ground. Combined, this has only further entrenched the occupation and undermined the realization of the two-State solution. In this context, we question the intended meaning of the action of Israel, the occupying Power, to dispatch 600,000 settlers and confiscate the land of the occupied State of Palestine to settle them there, knowing that this action in itself is a war crime according to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and it is totally contradictory to the two-State solution.

In light of Israel's destruction of the foundations upon which the political, economic and security agreements were signed with us, we reiterate that we cannot continue to be the only party bound by these agreements.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The State of Palestine continues to act with utmost responsibility to serve its people and uphold its legal obligations and commitments. It has consistently acted in good faith for the sake of peace. In this regard, we will continue our accession to international conventions and membership of international organizations, in order to safeguard our rights, and will move forward in the defense of our people through all of the legal and peaceful means available to us.

Ending the injustice inflicted on our people is a moral and humanitarian responsibility. We call today upon the international community to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and relevant United Nations resolutions to put an end to its violations and its illegal, aggressive and destructive policies and practices. For how long will Israel be allowed to act as if it is a State above the law? For how long the Palestinian people have to suffer the wrath of its occupying forces and police, who also protect the terrorist groups of settlers, turning a blind eye on punishing them and holding them accountable for their crimes?

Today, more than ever, we call upon the entire international community to provide international protection for the Palestinian people for as long as this illegal occupation continues. We call for the exertion of efforts to finally enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination, along with their other inalienable rights, including their right to achieve the independence and sovereignty of their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the pre-1967 borders, alongside the State of Israel living in peace and security, with respect for the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, which includes a just solution for the plight of Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as the release of all Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons and detention centers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We want the complete end of the Israeli occupation of our land and the achievement of the independence of the sovereign, contiguous State of Palestine on its national territory. We do not aspire to delegitimize any one, as some claim, but we look forward for the State of Palestine to be free and democratic, based on the foundations of accountability, transparency and the rule of law, protection and promotion of women's rights, equality among all segments of our people without ethnic or religious discrimination, spreading the culture of peace, tolerance and dialogue with others. The Palestinian people will continue to resist the occupation by peaceful means. We will continue in our efforts and our work, with the support of our brothers, sisters and friends, to make our State a reality cherished by our people.

We are also determined on preserving the unity of our land and our people, and we are working to lift the unjust, inhumane Israeli blockade imposed on our people in the Gaza Strip, and to advance reconstruction. We affirm that we will not accept temporary or partial solutions

and we are seriously seeking to form a government of national unity, functioning in accordance with the program of the Palestine Liberation Organization leading to presidential and legislative elections.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our hands are still outstretched for a just peace based on rightness and in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the signed agreements, and the Arab Peace Initiative. The status quo under occupation and the Israeli iron fist is unsustainable as it keeps our region in a constant spiral of violence, bloodshed and conflict. The application of justice is the only solution and must be done in its entirety.

It is time for some international powers to stop selective and biased policies in the application of justice and to desist from equating the victim with the executioner. Freedom, dear friends, brothers and sisters, has only one meaning. The policy of double standards will only prolong the conflict, spreading despair and frustration, fueling hatred.

The Palestinian people have the right to enjoy freedom, dignity, sovereignty and independence in their Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. This is imperative for our region to enjoy security, safety and stability. Peace is our ultimate goal. It is a Palestinian, Arab and international interest. It is within our reach, if there is a political will and there are sincere intentions to achieve it for a better future for all our peoples and for all our children.

I thank you for your kind attention. May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.