

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



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Statement by

*H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas
President of the State of Palestine*

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In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the United Nations General Assembly,

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads and Members of Delegations,

May peace, blessings, and the mercy of God be upon you,

Once again, I come to you carrying the cause of my people, who are struggling for freedom and independence, to remind you of the tragedy caused by the Nakba since seventy-five years ago, the effects of which continue to be exacerbated by the Israeli occupation of our territory. This occupation that challenges your resolutions that have exceeded a thousand, violates the principles of international law and international legitimacy, while racing against time to change the historical, geographical and demographic reality on the ground aimed at perpetuating the occupation and entrenching apartheid.

Despite this painful reality, and thirty years after the Oslo Accords, which Israel has totally discarded, we still maintain hope that your esteemed organization will be able to implement its resolutions demanding an end to the Israeli occupation of our territory and the realization of the independence of the fully sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the borders of the 4th of June 1967, as well as resolving the issue of Palestine refugees, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, especially General Assembly Resolution 194 (III), and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, all of which affirm the illegality of the Israeli occupation and its settlements, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I stand before you here, the Israeli racist right-wing government continues its attacks on our people, and through its army and its racist terrorist settlers, continues to intimidate and kill our people, destroy homes and property, steal our money and resources, and detain the bodies of the martyrs. This is being done in full view of the world, and without any deterrence, punishment, or accountability, and the leaders and ministers of this government have even been bragging about their apartheid policies on our people under occupation.

The occupation government also persists violating the City of Jerusalem and its people, assaulting our Islamic and Christian sacred sites, and violating the historical and legal status of the holy sites, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque, which international legitimacy has recognized as an exclusive place of worship for Muslims alone, including Bab Al-Rahma prayer hall and Al-Buraq Wall, according to a report by the League of Nations in 1930.

The occupying Power is also feverishly digging tunnels under and around Al-Aqsa Mosque, threatening its collapse, or the collapse of parts of it, which will lead to an explosion with untold consequences. We have repeatedly warned against transforming the political conflict into a religious conflict, for which Israel will bear full responsibility. I hereby call on the international community to assume its responsibilities in

preserving the historical and legal status of Jerusalem and its sacred places, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Al-Khalil (Hebron).

Here I wonder: Why remain silent about all the flagrant violations of international law that are being committed by Israel, the occupying Power? Why isn't it subjected to serious accountability, why are sanctions not imposed on it for ignoring and violating international resolutions, as is the case with other countries? Why practice double standards when it comes to Israel? Why accept that Israel is a state above the law? Isn't it time to answer these questions?

For our part, we will persist with our pursuit of accountability and justice at the relevant international bodies against Israel because of the continued Israeli occupation of our land, and the crimes that have been committed and are still being committed against us, as well as against both Britain and America for their roles in the fateful Balfour Declaration, and against everyone who had a role in the catastrophe and tragedy of our people, calling for acknowledgment, apology, reparations and compensation in accordance with international law.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In light of the deadlock in the peace process due to Israel's policies, we come before you to again appeal for the holding of an international peace conference, in which all countries concerned with achieving peace in the Middle East will participate. Therefore, I ask your esteemed organization, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, to call for and undertake the necessary arrangements to convene this peace conference, which may be the last opportunity to salvage the two-State solution and to prevent the situation from deteriorating more seriously, threatening the security and stability of our region and the entire world.

I also call on your organization and the Secretary-General to act to implement the resolutions to provide protection for the Palestinian people from the constant aggressions of the occupation army and the terrorist Israeli settlers, as well as to support our approach to the international courts and bodies with jurisdiction, because the current situation is intolerable and untenable.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the face of all that Israel is doing, systematically destroying the two-state solution, it has become necessary, in order to save this solution, to call on the Member States of your esteemed organization, each State, in its national capacity, to take practical steps on the basis of the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and international law. I also call on the States that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to declare their recognition and for the State of Palestine to be admitted to full membership in the United Nations.

I can neither understand, nor accept, that some States, including America and European States, are reluctant to recognize the State of Palestine, which the United Nations has accepted as an observer State. These States confirm every day their support for the two-State solution, but they recognize only one of them, which is Israel. Why? What is the danger posed by the State of Palestine obtaining full membership in the United Nations? Israel enjoys this international recognition, though it has not adhered to the conditions for its accession to the United Nations, namely the implementation of resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III). We therefore call on your esteemed organization to take deterrent measures against Israel, until it fulfills its obligations that were presented in a written declaration by its Minister of Foreign Affairs, at that time, Moshe Sharett.

Our request is for the sake of peace and justice, and out of respect for international law, international legitimacy, and this esteemed organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our people defend their homeland and their legitimate rights, through peaceful popular resistance as a strategic option for self-defense, and to liberate the land from a colonial occupation that does not believe in peace, and has no regard for the principles of truth, justice and human values. We will continue our resistance to this brutal occupation until it is defeated from our land.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are managing our affairs under extremely difficult and complex circumstances as a result of the restrictions that are being imposed on us by the occupying Power, which prevents us from accessing our natural resources, unlawfully withholds our money, and continues its siege on our people in the Gaza Strip, with the consequent exacerbation of the suffering of our people.

Moreover, Israel bears full responsibility, through its control over all the crossing points and dividing lines between the occupied West Bank and its surroundings, and for the deliberate spread of weapons, drugs, and criminal killings taking place in Arab cities inside Israel, part of which is spilling over into our areas, creating a great threat to the societal security of Palestinians everywhere in our territory.

I must tell you that as long as we continue to suffer under the abhorrent Israeli occupation, we will continue to need financial assistance from the international community, in addition to the crucial provision of financial support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). We are thankful to the international community for the support it has given us to build our State and our economy, and we look forward to the continuation of this support until the occupation ends and we are able to rely on ourselves.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our State institutions are engaged in a comprehensive development and reform process, and in this context, they are cooperating with international institutions and with our partners in the region and the world.

We have recently held local elections, elections for institutions, federations, unions, and others. There is a specialized committee to develop the justice sector in Palestine. Civil society is also playing its role in adding vitality to our political system. All that remains for us is to hold democratic general elections, as conducted in 1996, 2005, and 2006. But the Israeli government is obstructing this by its decision to prevent elections from being held in East Jerusalem, in spite of the significant intervention of many countries, as well as regional and international organizations, to enable our Palestinian people in Jerusalem to vote and run in these elections. Today, we renew our rejection of any position holding us responsible for not convening these elections, which are a Palestinian necessity, that we want today before tomorrow.

In the face of this intransigent position of the Israeli government, we will continue to approach the relevant international bodies to hold the Israeli government accountable and force it to allow us to hold these long overdue elections.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last May, I participated in the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, a tragedy recognized by this august organization. Yet, this painful anniversary continues to be ignored and denied by Israel, which is the party that is primarily responsible for this Nakba. I call upon you today to criminalize its denial, and to designate the 15th of May of each year as an international day to commemorate its anniversary, to commemorate the lives of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were killed in massacres committed by Zionist gangs and whose villages were demolished and who were forcibly displaced from their homes, with their number reaching 950,000 people, which constituted more than half of the Palestinian population at the time. This is the least that the United Nations should do in honor of these victims and in condemnation of this human tragedy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For several years, we have presented our Palestinian narrative, and the story of our people, which has been deliberately distorted by the Zionist and Israeli propaganda. We are relieved that the peoples of the world and many of its countries have begun to believe our narrative and sympathize with it, after having been misled for decades. We thank all those who contribute to sharing this narrative and all who support and sympathize with it. We also thank people of conscience everywhere in this world who today are standing up for Palestinian rights and support our people's struggle for freedom and independence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My message today to the Israelis is that this hideous occupation against us will not last regardless of their ambitions and delusions, because the Palestinian people are remaining on their land, which they have inhabited for thousands of years, generation after generation, as again confirmed by a recent UNESCO resolution regarding the city of Jericho. They cannot leave their land, and if anyone must leave it must be the occupiers and usurpers.

My message to the international community is that it should assume its responsibilities with full courage and implement its resolutions related to realizing Palestinian rights.

Finally, I address all of our people in Palestine, in the refugee camps, in the diaspora, and in every place in this vast world, with the highest expressions of appreciation and gratitude for their steadfastness and insistence on upholding their just cause and rights, and I pay tribute to our righteous martyrs, our brave prisoners, and our heroic injured people, and I say to everyone: a right is never lost when there is a demand behind it, and victory is ours, and we will celebrate the independence of our State in Jerusalem, our eternal capital, the crown jewel and the flower of cities.

They see it far away, and we see it close

God willing, Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you