

*In the Name of Allah, the Most-Merciful, the Most-Gracious*

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**Statement of**

**Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu**

**Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation**

**At**

**United Nations International Meeting  
on the Question of Palestine**

*The question of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons and  
detention facilities: legal and political implications*

**United Nations – Geneva  
3 and 4 April 2012**

**Your Excellency, the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations;**

**Your Excellency, Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;**

**Your Excellencies;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

*Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh;*

At the outset, I would like to convey to you the greetings of His Excellency the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, who bestowed on me the honor to represent him at this meeting. He wishes you all success.

Allow me also to express the appreciation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, His Excellency Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo, for his invitation for the convention of this forum to discuss the question of the Palestinian political prisoners at this critical juncture, and for his diligent work in advocating the just rights of the Palestinian people.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

This meeting comes at a very critical time with regard to the ordeal of the Palestinian political prisoners. Such ordeal is only one aspect of the continuous injustice and oppression that have historically befallen the

Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli occupation. This oppressive Israeli occupation deprives Palestinians of their rights, perpetuates their dispersal, oppresses and expels them, usurps their lands and builds settlements thereon, constructs the Racial Wall to isolate them, exercises ethnic cleansing against them, Judaizes their holy sites, and violates all related international resolutions, treaties and agreements.

The plight of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons, as just one part of the complicated Palestinian Question, represents a question of missing justice, stolen rights, and victims who are helpless in the face of the most horrible and systematic inhuman practices perpetuated through the legislation and application of racial Israeli laws and depriving them of their simplest human rights guaranteed by International Humanitarian Law, such as education, medical treatment, and communication with the outside world, let alone subjecting them to physical and psychological torture, oppressing and isolating them to mention only a few of the numerous violations.

**Your Excellencies;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Recently, the Israeli forces kidnapped two senior members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) from the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross in occupied *Al-Quds* in one of the most heinous crimes and flagrant infringements of international organizations. This has been another addition to the record of Israeli violations against Palestinian prisoners including children, women, elderly, patients, people with special needs, or Palestinian senior officials, inside detention facilities. Moreover, the Israeli occupation continues its

unjust and oppressive policies against the Palestinian prisoners resulting in deterioration of their living, health and humanitarian conditions. The Palestinian prisoners have been experiencing flagrant violations of all criteria and rules stipulated in International Humanitarian Law, Convention on Human Rights, Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and other related international covenants. Therefore, it is time now for action to advocate their cause so that they can enjoy freedom, justice and dignity inside their homeland.

In light of the above, we at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation reiterate our commitment to the cause of Palestinian prisoners, our support to them, and our steadfast backing to them in their ordeal until they become free and reintegrated into their Palestinian society. We salute their patience and endurance of hunger strike to let their message, voice and suffering reach the entire world.

Out of our recognition of the importance of raising the legal, political and humanitarian dimensions of the situation of Palestinian prisoners before competent international bodies, including International Court of Justice, Human Rights Council and other entities, we call for the internationalization of the question of Palestinian political prisoners and inclusion thereof in the agenda of the UN Security Council and General Assembly so that both can do their role in restoring the missing justice and obligating Israel to respect the provisions of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Convention, and other related international covenants.

To achieve this, we call for the intensification of efforts and coordinating joint action among friendly regional groups and their member states, and

the regional and international non-governmental organizations active in the fields of law and human rights to launch a diplomatic and judicial campaign to obtain freedom and dignity for the Palestinian prisoners. We commend your interest and consideration of forming a group of legal experts from the related legal institutions, in close coordination with the Palestinian National Authority, to develop legal conceptions to be taken jointly in parallel with the political and diplomatic efforts exerted towards the realization of the rights of prisoners and freeing and returning them to their homes and families.

At the end, I would like to seize this opportunity to assert the support and solidarity of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation with the Palestinian people in its endeavors to regain its inalienable national rights, including the rights of return, self-determination and establishment of its independent and sovereign state on the Palestinian lands occupied by Israel since 1967 with the eastern *Al-Quds* as its capital, and reaching a just resolution of the question of Palestinian refugees according to the UN Resolution no. 194.

I hope that this meeting succeeds in coordinating the efforts to serve the question of Palestinian prisoners, ameliorating their suffering, and contributing to securing their freedom, dignity and inalienable rights.

***Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh***

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