



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**AMBASSADOR DR. MALEEHA LODHI  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**IN THE DEBATE OF  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON**

**AGENDA ITEM-38:  
“THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE”  
AND  
AGENDA ITEM-37:  
“THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST”**

New York,  
23 November 2015

**Statement by Ambassador Dr. Maleeha Lodhi**  
**Permanent Representative of Pakistan**  
**in the Debate of the General Assembly on**  
**Agenda Item 38 - "The Question of Palestine" and Agenda Item 37 -**  
**"The situation in the Middle East"**

**November 23, 2014**

**Mr. President,**

As we commemorate another International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People today, let us acknowledge that the tragedy of Palestine- including the occupation of some of Islam's holiest sites in East Jerusalem - has long been at the heart of the turmoil in the Middle East.

It is this conflict, which has contributed most significantly to the anger and frustration among the people of the Arab and Muslim world. The resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is essential for peace and stability throughout the Middle East. It is also essential to enable us to address the drivers of extremism and terrorism.

The Palestinian people, who have endured a serial tragedy for almost seventy years, deserve the full solidarity and support of the international community.

They have suffered decades of foreign occupation, repression and humiliation. They have been subjected to targeted killings, collective punishment, arbitrary detention and countless other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

But sadly no end seems to be in sight to their suffering.

**Mr. President,**

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian freedoms and rights, harassment and violence by Israeli settlers, construction of illegal settlements, terror and provocation in and around the holy sites, including the Al-Aqsa mosque, and bleak prospects for peace are compounding the plight of the Palestinian people.

The collective punishment of Gaza continues for the eighth year. The warning that Gaza could become becoming unlivable by 2020 has gone unheeded. The situation deteriorated further when the Israeli offensive last year pushed many more Palestinian families into poverty and worsened their economic conditions. Together with delays in reconstruction and continuing curbs on movement, this warning is already becoming a reality.

All this, coupled with the continued persecution of Palestinian youth, will inescapably lead to more violence and a deepening of their sense of despondency.

**Mr. President,**

We believe durable peace can only be achieved through political solutions, not by heavy-handed tactics and use of brute force against unarmed civilians. A just, sustainable and equitable resolution of the Middle East conflict is only possible through an independent and viable State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Resumption of negotiations is the best way forward. But talks should be meaningful and result oriented and not a means to provide space to Israel to further shrink prospects of a contiguous state of Palestine through its illegal settlement construction on Palestinian lands. The international community must work with determination to help in resuming a process with clear timelines and parameters.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. While it continues to procrastinate and dither for political reasons, the prospects of a two-state solution keep fading. Israeli intransigence and its belligerent actions continue to undermine the possibility of reviving the peace process.

The Security Council has an obligation to play a role. It must act on this most potent threat to international peace and security.

We support the Palestinian demand for international protection. The paper on the subject, which the Secretary General shared with the Council last month, provides options that need to be seriously considered.

But, Mr. President, Palestinians cannot simply be asked to wait until another peace process takes shape. Immediate steps must be taken to alleviate their immense suffering and give them hope about their future. Pressure must be mounted on Israel to immediately:

- Lift the blockade of Gaza;
- Irrevocably end all illegal settlement construction;
- Release all Palestinian detainees; and
- End the demolition of Palestinian houses and expulsion of Palestinians from their properties.

These steps are not ends unto themselves. They are simply the means to prevent the situation from going into an abyss.

**Mr. President,**

Another dimension of conflict in the Middle East is the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. Israeli settlement policy and illegal practices of controlling resources and changing the demographic composition and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan is blatant disregard of UN resolutions.

Lasting and sustainable peace in the Middle East would need bold decisions. Withdrawal of occupation forces from all Arab lands, including from Lebanon and the Syrian Golan Heights is not only vital for the future of the next generation of Palestinians, but for international peace and security itself.

This will need visionary diplomacy, especially by those who wield power and influence with the principal parties. Such diplomacy is essential if we are to defy the dire predictions of disaster in the Middle East that abound today.

**I thank you.**