

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



STATEMENT

by

**THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

24 November 2015, New York

Mr. President,

I would like to reiterate Turkey's strong and longstanding commitment to the establishment of a peaceful, stable, inclusive and democratic environment respectful of fundamental human rights and freedoms in the Middle East.

The Israeli-Palestine conflict remains the core challenge for the establishment of such an environment. Failing to address this issue will further destabilize the region, deepen the despair and lead to more extremism.

The recent escalation that began following the entry of Israeli security forces into Al-Haram Al-Sharif reminded once again how sensitive and dramatic the situation is in the absence of any real hope for peace. We are very concerned about the latest developments and strongly condemn the disproportionate use of force by Israeli security forces.

We should all be very clear about the root cause of the problem, which is the illegal occupation of East Jerusalem and other Palestinian territories by Israel.

The historical injustice, reinforced by daily illegal practices of Israel on the ground undermines the very belief in the possibility of a peaceful coexistence. It fuels hatred, alienation and radicalism in the region. Palestinians are still deprived of their right to have a decent life in dignity, respect and freedom.

As the Secretary General rightly underlined, the Palestinians' hopes for peace have been dashed countless times. The international community should convince the Palestinians about the possibility of a better future.

We all agree that the status quo is not sustainable. The settlement activities continue despite numerous calls and condemnation of the international community. Impunity leads to a steady increase in settler violence.

The situation in Gaza also remains worrying. 8 years of illegal blockade and 3 Israeli military operations led to a tremendous devastation, despair and insecurity. The restrictions on access, movement and economic activities continue and the reconstruction remains slow.

Palestine's just cause has been once again confirmed at global scale by the General Assembly's decision which paved the way to the raising of the Palestinian flag at the UN. The EU's decision regarding the labeling of settlement products is also an important step as it reaffirms that settlements are illegal under international law.

On the Palestinian side, the need for Palestinian reconciliation is more relevant than ever. The support and encouragement of the international community is vital in this regard. Once established, the Palestinian National Unity Government, with strong and inclusive institutions, should establish control over the entire Palestinian territory.

Mr. President,

The current situation is a somber reflection of what is going to happen in case the peace prospect is lost. In this vein, the international community should uphold its responsibility and renew its engagement to reach a negotiated political settlement based on two-state solution in accordance with international law, relevant UN resolutions and Arab Peace Initiative. Efforts towards the adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution setting a timeframe and parameters for peace negotiations based on the two-state peace vision should be intensified. The Council should assume its responsibility in this regard.

Turkey's commitment to support the Palestinian people for a dignified life will never cease. We will support efforts to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict and to establish a sovereign and independent Palestinian state within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Thank you.