



**Remarks**

**by**

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**President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**New York**

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Special Meeting on the Occasion of the Observance of the International Day  
of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

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Chairman of the Committee,  
Deputy Secretary-General,  
President of the Security Council,  
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations,  
Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees  
in the Near East,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the invitation to address this year's special meeting on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This important Day of Solidarity has been observed annually since 1978, following a decision taken by the UN General Assembly the previous year.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to thank the Committee for its dedicated work toward the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and for promoting international solidarity with the people of Palestine in their legitimate aspirations for independence and sovereignty.

This year's observation takes place while the renewed round of the Middle East peace negotiations is underway. We all hope the ongoing talks will lead to an understanding on all six permanent status issues, and to reaching a just and lasting settlement to the conflict. In this context, I reiterate our appreciation for the ongoing diplomatic efforts that are being complemented by a comprehensive Palestinian economic revival plan.

Excellencies,

Following its decision last year to admit the State of Palestine as a non-member observer State, the General Assembly welcomed the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, as a Head of State for his address to the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, during

September's General Debate segment. Prior to that, in August of this year, the State of Palestine welcomed the Secretary-General as a State guest when he visited Palestine for the first time after the recognition by the General Assembly. In his presence, a country agreement was signed between the United Nations and the State of Palestine.

Another positive development, which took place soon after the resumption of negotiations, was the agreement to release 104 Palestinian prisoners who had been held in Israeli prisons for more than 20 years; this decision had been repeatedly called for by the General Assembly.

I am also encouraged by the recent commitment of Arab leaders to renew the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which holds the promise for regional stability and which can indeed become an important part of current peace efforts.

I call on the Governments and people of both Israel and Palestine to avoid actions that would undermine the fragile hope created by this renewed round of negotiations, and to cease and desist from any actions that are in contravention to international law and would pose a major impediment to peace in the Middle East and, more importantly, render the two-State solution impossible. Here, I specifically reference the issues of settlements and annexation.

Ongoing peace negotiations must be given a chance for peace to take root and flourish, but peace cannot be meaningful and durable without taking fully into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which are key to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. As the President of the 68th session of the General Assembly, I would like to reiterate that the General Assembly remains committed to a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine resulting in the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within recognized, pre-1967 borders.

Distinguished Delegates,

It remains the General Assembly's resolute position that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in a

satisfactory manner in accordance with international law. In this context, the International Day of Solidarity continues to serve an important purpose of reminding the Member States of this collective international responsibility towards the Palestinian people and their free and prosperous future.

I urge Member States to maintain and enhance their support and publicity for the observance of this day of Solidarity and for the peaceful resolution of the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this regard, I welcome the initiative of the Committee to request the General Assembly to proclaim the year 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Let us use that important initiative to redouble our efforts to create the necessary environment conducive for the successful outcome of the on-going peace talks.

I call upon all Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations to make 2014 the decisive year for achieving peace between Israel and Palestine.

Thank you.

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