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November 29, 2016

**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Special meeting in Observance of the “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People”**

senegal, President of the Security Council: Chair, President of the General Assembly, Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Israeli Practices Affecting the Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, Ambassador of Palestine, I wish to thank you for the invitation that you have extended to me and to the Security Council to take part in this ceremony commemorating this international day. This is an opportunity we have to reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian people at a time when we are coming towards June 2017, which will mark 50 years of the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Senegal, through me, wishes to take the floor today on behalf of the Security Council in order to take stock of the activities taken by this illustrious house in order to ensure a fair and lasting solution to the Palestinian conflict in this year 2016. Chair, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as his colleagues working for peace in the Middle East, regularly draw the Security Council's attention to the growing obstacles which hinder the achievement of peace in the Middle East. Alas, this year again, as was the case in the past Day of Solidarity, has taken stock of actions on the ground which give rise to major concerns. It should be recalled here that at least 238 Palestinian people and 30 Israelis – these include many children – have lost their lives since violence began once again in 2015. I’d like to take this opportunity once again to roundly condemn the violence – this violence and this terrorism, whoever the perpetrators or whatever their motivation. We should also point to the acceleration of settlement activities but also point to the growing humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip. All of this is undertaken against a backdrop of a lack of clear prospects for a political solution.

Chair, there are public debates held every quarter. There was one in January held at ministerial level. In addition to that, the council – the Security Council on the 2nd of July held a review to review the Quartet’s report on this situation on the ground. This was a report published on the 1st of July, 2016, pursuant to the declaration of the 2nd of February, 2016. The report of the Quartet was not able to be comprehensively – or did not comprehensively analyze the political, legal, and humanitarian, as well as the security aspects of the conflict. It was nevertheless able to pinpoint serious threats to peace and issue interesting recommendations regarding the two-state solution. These recommendations deserve our attention.

Chair, we urge parties pursuant to their commitments made in favor of the two-state solution to end colonization, to pursue a definitive solution to disputes, and to achieve a solution which meet Israel’s security needs and are in line with a legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to have a sovereign state. I’d like to echo the appeal issued by the Quartet to the Israeli government pursuant to previous agreements to ensure there is a transfer of competencies to the Palestinian authority, in particular in Area C in order to foster progress in terms of housing, accommodation, access to water, energy, communication facilities, agriculture, and natural resources. Moreover, I reaffirm the Quartet’s appeal to both parties to strive to ensure tensions are abated. They should exercise restraint both in their words and deeds. The two parties should also undertake the necessary measures to hinder and stymie violence and to prevent civilians – protect civilians, excuse me – and their property and goods. I also would like to take this opportunity to renew our hope to see elections held across the Palestinian territory, and we hope that these elections will pave the way for reconciliation and the formation of a government for national unity which respects the principles of the Quartet and is in line with the Cairo Agreement on the basis of the platform of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Chair, the humanitarian situation is very difficult in Gaza. Around 2 million people live here; 70% of these people are in need of assistance and this humanitarian situation has attracted the Council’s attention. Despite efforts made namely through the Gaza reconstruction mechanism, three-quarters of Gaza homes still require reconstruction and rehabilitation. The reason for this is because only 40% of commitments made during the Cairo donor conference have been upheld. This is one reason for this need of assistance. At the request of a number of members of the Council, the humanitarian dimension of the occupied Palestinian territories is something that is being examined in Security Council briefings held monthly on the Middle East, including Palestine. Palestine is in a very difficult situation, namely as a result of the occupation but also as a result of a decrease in humanitarian assistance provided by international partners. We appreciate the work of humanitarian actors to help Palestinian refugees, particularly the UNRWA. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon Member States to continue providing support to UNRWA. I’d also in this connection like to commend Canada as having – for having contributed C$25 million to these relief efforts.

Chair, five Member States of the Security Council namely Malaysia, Egypt, Angola, Senegal, and Venezuela, have convened two Arria-formula meetings. These were held on the 6th of May and the 14th of October, 2016. These were meetings devoted respectively to the issue of international protection of the Palestinian people and illegal settlements as an obstacle to peace and the two-state solution.

Chair, moreover, efforts – the continued efforts of the Quartet are being made and the Security Council has taken note of the French Middle East peace initiative, and this all aims to lend new momentum to the peace process. There is a package of stimuli on the basis of previous platforms such as the Declaration of Madrid principles, the Oslo Accords, the Quartet Roadmap, and the Arab Peace Initiative. Diplomatic efforts have also been made by Egypt and by the Russian Federation. These are all initiatives which should receive further coordination.

Chair, it behooves the Security Council as a guarantor of peace and international security to continue its endeavors and to step them up in order to find a definitive solution to the disputes which are able – which are likely to sow the seeds of terrorism and increase global threats which go beyond the Middle East.

Thank you.