

Dear Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our people continue to endure great and unbearable suffering. The continuation of the occupation does not only deprive our people of their political rights to live in a free and secure homeland, but the brutal practices and measures deny them their human rights and deprive them from their inalienable rights guaranteed by international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, especially those rights related to the rights to life, to protection of property, to livelihood, and to movement free of humiliation and deprivation.

Israel, the occupying Power, continues with its expansionist policies with its pursuit of the settlement colonization of our land at an accelerated rate in addition to its continuing construction of the annexation and expansion Wall, which separates brother from brother, father from son, patient from doctor, student from teacher, and farmers and their land. The occupying Power also continues to carry out its brutal and inhumane policies through military incursions into cities, towns and villages, extrajudicial assassinations, killing the children of our people, in addition to imprisoning thousands of them in its jails. It also persists in its intensification of collective punishment with its punitive blockade of the Gaza Strip, denying more than 1.5 million Palestinian civilians from fulfilling their needs for food, medicine, fuel, education and enjoyment the minimal requirements of a dignified life. In addition, the occupying Power continues to impose more than 600 checkpoints and roadblocks between our cities and villages, impeding the movement of our people, which at times brings life, including our internal commercial exchanges, to a near standstill. The impact has been disastrous on the future of development of our country.

As for Jerusalem - the capital of our future independent State and the cornerstone of any just and lasting solution - the occupying Power is doing all it can to Judaize the City by measures suffocating the population, compelling them to leave, and by surrounding their neighborhoods with settlements. All such practices endanger the character of the City as an Arab, Islamic and Christian City. In spite of the ruthlessness of the occupation and its deliberate daily affronts to our people's rights and human dignity, we are determined, without hesitation, to continue with our strategy, which is based on negotiations and dialogue as the only path for resolving the conflict and for achieving an end guaranteeing freedom and sovereignty for one party and security and recognition for the other. In pursuing our goals, we are not demanding anything more or less than that stipulated by international legitimacy: the complete withdrawal of Israel from the territories it occupied in 1967 and a just and agreed solution for the refugee question on the basis of resolution 194 (III) and two States for two peoples, living side by side in peace, security and mutual respect.

We remain committed to the Arab Peace Initiative, which was widely received by the international community, and we consider it to be the opening for accomplishment of a comprehensive regional peace, which gives Israel recognition and normalization with the Arabs in exchange for full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and implementation of the two-State solution. Yet, we do not see from the other side a clear response to this courageous initiative. We are also committed to the Annapolis process and we have fulfilled our obligations in this regard and have worked very hard in cooperation with the Quartet to harmonize our

situation with these principles. We have also undertaken substantive negotiations with the Israeli side to reach a settlement for all final status issues. Yet we have been unable to reach an acceptable solution for any of these issues.

This is not the result of misfortune; it is the result of intentional obstruction of the peace process and determination by the Israeli side to impose a solution that does not guarantee the return of our land and the rights of our refugees and the possibility of establishing a contiguous and viable State. What we mean by a just and lasting solution, which will end the violence in this region for once and for all, is not a partial solution that will create the fertile environment for a continuation of the conflict that is more intense and deadly and could spread in the region, God forbid, if we don't all exert the efforts necessary to contain it and eliminate its causes.

It is imperative in this connection to thank all the parties that have partaken in or supported the peace process. We are obligated, however, to recognize the United Nations and its role in particular and to express our gratitude and appreciation for its work, since it is the international organization that has defended our cause and kept it alive and extended the hand of help to our people and legislated the rules and recommendations that constitute the foundations that cannot be bypassed in any just, lasting and comprehensive solution. We call on the United Nations to continue its central role until the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people.

We reiterate to all of you our appreciation and gratitude for your dedicated and principled efforts and your permanent solidarity with the cause of our people, and we reaffirm our commitment to remain steadfast in our belief in peace, which all the peoples of our region are striving for, asking God Almighty to bestow upon us a future where we can all enjoy peace, security, stability and prosperity.

Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of God.