

*Permanent Observer Mission
of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة الراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas
President of the State of Palestine
Chairman of the Executive Committee
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President of the Palestinian National Authority

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H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly,
Your Majesties, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of this session, wishing you every success in fulfilling your noble tasks, and we convey through you our greetings to H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his valuable efforts during his presidency of the General Assembly in its 64th session. We express as well our appreciation to the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless efforts to strengthen the role and work of the United Nations and its bodies in all fields. We express highest appreciation for his role and the roles played by these bodies, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has worked and is still working to provide essential services to the Palestine refugees, who for more than sixty years still await the redress of their plight and the realization of their right to return to their homes and properties.

We know that the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly is replete with matters and issues of pressing concern to the entire human race and our planet Earth, particularly those relating to armed conflicts and wars and the struggle of peoples living under foreign occupation for realization of their right to self-determination, as well as climate change, global warming, natural disasters, and the economic and financial crises. All of this is happening at a time when we are witnessing the just demands calling for revitalization of the United Nations and particularly the reform of the Security Council to make it more broadly representative and truly embody the current international situation, especially in light of the emergence of new forces, which must be represented in the Security Council to enhance its role and efficacy in maintaining international peace and security.

There is also significant discontent over the non-compliance by some States with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and this requires the international community to take vigorous, effective measures to compel these countries to respect and implement these resolutions and to bring an end to foreign occupation, colonization and exploitation in our world in order to promote the values of freedom, justice, tolerance and coexistence and to combat extremism and terrorism. Indeed, the United Nations has a fundamental role in promoting cooperative relations between peoples and guiding them towards investment in community development and infrastructure and fighting poverty, unemployment, desertification, disease and epidemics and their lethal risks to the human race and the future of our planet as a whole, humanely and environmentally.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our people in particular, our homeland, Palestine, and our region, the Middle East, are facing dangerous problems that continue to push them into the corner of violence and conflict, wasting chance after chance to seriously address the issues faced by the peoples of the region and to attain comprehensive and genuine solutions. This is the result of the mentality of expansion and domination, which still controls the ideology and policies of Israel, the occupying Power, which continues to occupy our land and which has made non-compliance with resolutions of international legitimacy, including UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions its prevailing policy. Such disrespect has rendered ineffective those resolutions, denigrating the

credibility of the United Nations and deepening the predominant view that there is a policy of double standards, especially with regard to the cause of the Palestinian people, and that Israel is a State above the law, as it has been flouting all these resolutions and relentlessly carrying out oppression, arrests and detentions, killings, destruction, demolition of homes, siege, settlement expansion and establishment of the annexation apartheid wall, violating and undermining the rights of our people and presence in their homeland without consequence.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ancient city of Jerusalem, capital of the independent State of Palestine and designated by a UNESCO decision as one of the world's human heritage sites requiring protection, is exposed to actions by the occupying Power that are altering and distorting the realities on the ground and destroying landmarks, cemeteries and the religious, spiritual and historical identity of the Holy City in all aspects in an accelerated matter, aimed at erasing its historical character and pre-empting final status negotiations. This has included the excavations under Al-Aqsa Mosque, demolition of homes, deportations and revocation of the residency rights of its population and imposition of siege on the City in an attempt to isolate it from its natural Palestinian Arab surroundings and control the Holy City geographically and demographically. This reality is a provocation to our people; it antagonizes them and causes anger, especially throughout the Arab and Islamic world, creates instability in our region, and constitutes a serious obstacle to the achievement of peace and security. All of these illegal Israeli measures and policies must be ceased.

This is also the case, Mr. President, with regard to the situation in the Gaza Strip, which has been subjected to an unjust and unprecedented blockade by land, air and sea, in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions, in addition to being subjected to the Israeli military aggression, with the severest ramifications. This illegal blockade and aggression have resulted in the destruction of the infrastructure and productive capacity of Gaza and destroyed 25% of its homes and nearly 75% of its livelihoods, leading to widespread unemployment and dependence on international aid. The Israeli blockade is preventing our people in Gaza from reconstruction, despite the fact that the international donor community has pledged approximately \$5 billion to finance reconstruction. This blockade against the Gaza Strip must be lifted completely and fully and the tragedy and suffering of our people there must be ended.

We welcome the efforts of the international independent fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council concerning the Israeli attack on the "Freedom Flotilla", which was carrying humanitarian assistance for our people in the Gaza Strip, and we welcome the conclusions reached by the mission, and we also look forward to the submission by the UN Panel of Inquiry established by the Secretary-General of its findings to the Security Council.

I must also, Mr. President, add to all of the above the fact that there remain thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and detention centers. They are all struggling for their freedom and must be released, bringing an end to their suffering. This is essential for creating a positive environment for the attainment of peace. We cannot reach a peace agreement that does not liberate all of them from their chains and cells.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of all of this and despite the historic injustice that has been inflicted upon our people, their desire to achieve a just peace which guarantees the achievement of their national rights in freedom and independence has not and will not diminish, and our wounded hands are still able to carry the olive branch from the rubble of the trees that the occupation uproots every day. Our people aspire to live in security, peace and stability on their Palestinian national soil to build the life and future of our generations. We are willing and ready to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace settlement, based on righteousness and justice and on the resolutions of international legitimacy and which leads to the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from all the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, allowing for the State of Palestine and its people, with East Jerusalem as their capital, to enjoy independence and sovereignty and for peace to prevail in the Middle East as a whole.

Based upon our genuine desire to realizing a future of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, we have decided to enter into final status negotiations. We will exert every effort to reach an agreement for Palestinian-Israeli peace within one year, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Roadmap and the vision of the two-State solution. We have reaffirmed, in the name of the Palestine Liberation Organization, our adherence to the just peace option, and our determination, seriousness and sincere intention for the success of these negotiations, in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles.

The international community should draw lessons from the reasons for the failure of the political process and the inability to reach its goals in the past. Restoring the credibility of the peace process mainly requires compelling the Government of Israel to comply with its obligations and commitments, particularly to cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in and around East Jerusalem, as well as the dismantling of the annexation apartheid Wall and an end to the policy of blockade and closures and the removal of the checkpoints that restrict the lives and movement of our people and deprive them of their basic human rights.

Our demands for the cessation of settlement activities, the lifting of the siege and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices do not constitute arbitrary pre-conditions in the peace process, but are consistent with the implementation of obligations and previous commitments, compliance with which has been repeatedly reaffirmed in all resolutions adopted since the very start of the political process. Israel's implementation of these obligations and commitments will lead to the creation of the necessary environment for the success of the negotiations and will give credibility to the pledge to implement the final agreement reached. Israel must choose between peace and the continuation of settlements.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

From this rostrum, we reaffirm that we will continue, as we have always, to exert every effort possible, so that these negotiations will achieve the aims and objective of realizing peace by addressing all final status issues, namely Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, water, security and the release of all prisoners and detainees. This must be done in a manner that will

achieve freedom, independence and justice for the Palestinian people in their homeland, rectify the historical injustice inflicted upon them, achieve security and safety for them, and achieve a just peace in the Middle East, including the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and usher in a new era of stability, progress, prosperity, coexistence and good neighborliness.

Rectifying the path of the political process can only be achieved when the international community itself assumes the main responsibility for ending the Israeli occupation, the longest occupation in contemporary history, and ensuring our people's right to self-determination in their independent sovereign State on the basis of 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees. This must be done via the implementation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, and the provisions of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. All of these constitute the legitimate terms of reference for any successful negotiations for a final peace settlement.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our people, despite the depth and extent of suffering they have endured, hold steadfast to their rights, their land and their national soil. At the same time, they are determined to restore national unity between the two parts of our homeland. We are exerting every effort to restore unity through dialogue and through the good, honorable efforts by brothers and friends, especially the Arab Republic of Egypt. We will spare no effort on our part to end the division resulting from the coup against Palestinian legitimacy and institute democracy as a firm foundation in our political life. We will uphold our responsibilities in building the national institutions for our independent State and building our national economy and ensuring security and safety for our citizens under our national authority, which is based on the law, accountability, transparency and justice. We will also uphold all of our obligations in accordance with the Roadmap and the agreements reached between the two sides.

In conclusion, it is imperative in this regard to convey our appreciation to all those who have contributed to and are sponsoring and supporting the peace process. Here, I would like to express our thanks to H.E. United States President Barack Obama, who affirmed in his statement before the Assembly two days ago the two-State solution and the necessity for a freeze of settlement activities as well as his deep hope for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine and its full membership in the United Nations. On this occasion, we affirm our complete readiness to cooperate with the American efforts for the success of the political process to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

It is also incumbent upon me to express our appreciation to the United Nations that has preserved our cause and has extended a helping hand to our people and adopted resolutions and decisions, which constitute the basis that can not be bypassed in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution. From this rostrum, we call upon the United Nations to continue its pivotal role until righteousness is achieved and our people have regained their usurped rights and peace prevails in our entire region.

We renew to you our greetings and appreciation for your tireless efforts and your positions of solidarity with the just cause of our people as we renew our faith in peace, which all the peoples in our region aspire to, asking God to bless us with a future in which we will all enjoy peace, security and stability.

May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you.