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Message of H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, President of the Palestinian National Authority, on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November 2010:

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

H.E. Sir Mark Lyall Grant, President of the Security Council of the United Nations,

H.E. Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo, Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I am pleased to convey to your meeting at United Nations Headquarters and, through you, to the entire international community, the warmest greetings of the Palestinian people and their leadership, and our profound gratitude for your solidarity with our people, and your support for their struggle for the realization of their inalienable rights and the establishment of just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

I wish to also express our profound appreciation for the efforts of H.E. the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and for the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, H.E. Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo, aimed at restoring the rights of the Palestinian people, bringing an end to their suffering and achieving peace in the region. Your important role clearly and effectively contributes to the promotion of international solidarity with our cause and support for the noble aspirations of our people towards self-determination, freedom and independence.

Since its inception, the United Nations has continued dealing with and shouldering its responsibilities towards the question of Palestine until its resolution in all aspects through an end to the Israeli occupation of our land and our holy places and allowing our people to determine their destiny, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the consensus of

the entire world. It has adopted numerous resolutions based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law. Although these resolutions have as of yet not been implemented due to Israel's refusal and intransigence, they remain valid and still constitute the foundation for protection for the rights of our people, and the basis for achieving justice, which is a prerequisite for achieving peace. We recall here that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) constitute the basis for the peace process in the Middle East.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a reality that can not be ignored or denied, which is the historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people, which is ongoing. There is another reality, namely that we, as the Palestine Liberation Organization have, for many years, dealt with our struggle with considerable realism. Since 1974, our national councils have acknowledged the principle of resolving the conflict on the basis of the two States and through negotiations. Our people declared the independence of the State of Palestine as a peace initiative in 1988 in which we made a historic, painful concession in order to achieve a peace that guarantees their rights with the establishment of a Palestinian State on the 4 June 1967 borders in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

But the basis for progress towards a peaceful settlement is the principle of partnership and agreement on the legal terms of reference and commitment to agreements reached in order to solve the problems imposed by the legacy of this long, bitter and bloody conflict. This partnership must be one that understands the legitimate concerns of the other and lays the foundations for a new and different future for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

I must stress here that the Palestinian partner will continue to be a real partner, not to improve the ugly face of the occupation but to bring an end to that occupation. Moreover, negotiations must be fair and lead to a clear and binding agreement, and this does not mean that the powerful party, Israel, should be permitted to consistently impose its will on us. Our commitment is firm and strong to achieve a comprehensive agreement that leads to two viable States - one already exists, Israel, and the other must achieve its independence, the State of Palestine - on the borders of 4 June 1967.

Within this framework, and based on our determination to achieve peace, we have responded to the US and international initiatives and efforts aimed at a resumption of the peace process and negotiations between us and Israel following a period of suspension. With the help of many Arab and international parties, we were able to break the deadlock that plagued this process. We had hoped that the resumption of negotiations on the final status issues and a permanent settlement, after removing the obstacles they face, would constitute a serious and true beginning to achieving genuine and lasting peace and security between us and Israel. For that to happen, the deterioration in the peace process must be addressed, the appropriate atmosphere must be created, and bridges of confidence between the two sides must be built.

This can only be done through respect for the terms of reference of the process peace as

defined by the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative and the vision of two-States and the strict and honest implementation of the signed agreements. This requires bringing a decisive and final end to the vicious Israeli colonial settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes a time bomb that could destroy everything we have accomplished on the road to peace at any moment.

Confiscation of land, the expulsion of Palestinian citizens from their homes, and construction of the annexation apartheid Wall, which is condemned internationally, must be ceased. Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails must be released. The unjust, inhumane siege imposed on our people in the Gaza Strip must be lifted. The illegal transfer of Israeli civilians into the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, must be halted, because there can be no co-existence between settlement activities and peace. Settlements are a flagrant and aggressive manifestation of the occupation and the mentality of expansion. While peace means recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people, and a commitment to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy, in letter and spirit, and the principle of land for peace, the two-State solution and the road map.

There is no way to attain a real, lasting and comprehensive peace that is not based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, which call upon Israel to completely withdraw from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. The alternative is to slip further towards the unknown. The path of the political process must be corrected, erosion of the negotiations must be stopped, and the commitment to the obligations of the just and lasting peace process must be reaffirmed. This is required by the demands of justice and international law, which are what will bring peace, and not according to the so-called economic peace or practical considerations based on what can be "accepted" by the occupying Power, pre-acceptance of which has undermined the peace process and the prospects for security and stability of the region.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What could extinguish the fire of violence and control extremist tendencies is the brave step towards the permanent status negotiations to reach practical and fair agreements that end the occupation of our land and our holy places and provide a solid stability for the region, which is replete with tensions, which constitute sources for both clear and concealed eruptions. That is why we strongly reject all unilateral actions by Israel, the occupying Power, and demand its immediate cessation because they affect the final status issues and are a clear attempt to unilaterally determine the map of the final solution. So I address my words through you to the entire international community. We must draw lessons from the results of the past failures of international efforts to compel Israel to end its settlement policies and practices of aggression, which have caused so much damage to and undermined the credibility of the peace process with our people.

The core of this conflict are occupation and settlement activities and it is time for the world to address the roots of this conflict by ending the occupation and allowing for the achievement of independence of the State of Palestine, which we hope, as President Obama stated in the General Assembly in September, will be a new, active and recognized member of

the United Nations in the next year, assuring you all that the United Nations and international legitimacy will remain the reference and sanctuary for us to take any decisions in the event of failed negotiations, which we assure you we will exert all efforts to make succeed.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Palestinian people draw their unwavering faith from the justness of their cause, and from your support and the support and solidarity of all our brothers and friends who are keen on the success of the peace process. We thus need your continued efforts and those of the co-sponsors of the peace process, including the efforts of President Barack Obama, the Russian Federation, the European Union, Japan, China and the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab brothers and friends everywhere, particularly here at the United Nations.

I am completely confident, as we are on the threshold of celebrating a new year, that the suffering of our people is coming to an end. I am also sure that the renewal and confirmation of your solidarity and support for our people, especially at this time, will bolster our steadfastness as will your support of our just position and our sincere efforts to establish a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region - a peace that will last and be consolidated and entrenched; a peace based on justice, fairness, equality and mutual respect and creative cooperation; a peace that guarantees the peoples of the region security, stability and prosperity and that guarantees freedom and independence for the Palestinian people; a peace that will turn the page on the past with all its agonies, pains, repression and suffering; a peace that opens a new era of cooperation and coexistence in the region where there is hope, security, and prospects for a better future for all our children.

We renew to all of you our gratitude and appreciation for your good efforts and your firm and constant solidarity with the cause of our people. And, I renew my message to the Israeli people that our hand is still able to carry the olive branch, from the rubble, and will remain stretched for a just peace in order to secure a safe future for our children and their children.

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