



# SRI LANKA

Statement

by

H.E. Ambassador Palitha T. B. Kohona  
Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations

Agenda Item 16 : Question of Palestine

64th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations  
Plenary Meeting

New York, 01<sup>st</sup> December 2009

*( Please check against delivery )*

---

**Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations**  
**630 Third Avenue, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017 · Tel: (212) 986 7040 · Fax: (212) 986 1838**  
**E-mail: [mail@slmission.com](mailto:mail@slmission.com) Web : [www.slmission.com](http://www.slmission.com)**

---

Mr. President,

I wish to express the sincere appreciation of my delegation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its report contained in document A/64/35. We would also like to thank the Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Paul Badji of Senegal for his comprehensive statement on the Committee's work.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka has consistently extended its steadfast support for the Palestinian people in the pursuit of their inalienable rights, including the right to statehood. This has been a matter persistently advocated by our President, H.E Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa over the last forty-years. I would seek your indulgence to quote the message he has sent to mark this year's observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

**I quote:**

"On the solemn occasion to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, on behalf of the people and the Government of Sri Lanka, I take this opportunity to reiterate our unequivocal and sincere support for the people and the Government of Palestine for their just struggle to achieve their inalienable rights, including the right to Statehood.

We remain deeply concerned about the widespread suffering and hardships the Palestinian people continue to undergo and the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian Territory. We welcome the new efforts and commitments by the international community to reinvigorate the peace process. However, we are disappointed that no tangible results have been achieved for the two-State solution and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

On this Commemorative Day of Solidarity, I wish to recall my association with the cause of the Palestinian people for nearly forty years during which I have advocated the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and a viable solution to the conflict. I sincerely hope that all peace initiatives that have as their main objective the realization of a two-State solution and the renewed efforts of the international community will enable the speedy creation of a Palestinian State co-existing with Israel in peace, harmony and prosperity".

**End quote**

Mr. President,

The Palestinian people have suffered for too long and have lived under occupation. The Denial of their fundamental right to statehood due to continued Israeli occupation has seriously affected the socio-economic wellbeing of the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

We believe that it is imperative to fully implement the Security Council Resolutions and the Resolutions adopted by this Assembly, to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Middle East and the Palestinian question. The principle of land for peace, the road map, and the Arab Peace Initiative are important milestones in the process of a permanent two-state solution.

For peace to be viable and sustainable in the Palestinian territory, Israel must withdraw from all of the Palestinian Territories, back to the 1967 borders. It must end the economic blockade and siege of the Gaza Strip. The Illegal expansion of settlements and continuation of the construction of the separation wall changing the demographic character of the Palestinian territory, would only increase tensions and animosities between the two parties to the conflict. The Palestinian Authority needs to continue the implementation of its security plan and make every effort at its disposal to improve law and order.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka wishes to reiterate its support for the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas. We stress the need to preserve and protect the national and democratic institutions which are vital for a future independent Palestinian State. We, therefore, urge the Palestinian groups to act speedily to reconcile and reunite within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority. Unity among Palestinian peoples is their strength. In this regard, we commend the initiative of Egypt, for the promotion of a dialogue among the parties concerned to restore Palestinian national unity.

Mr. President,

Serious efforts must be made for the early resumption of negotiations by the two sides with the objective of reaching a final agreement, to enable both the Israelis and the Palestinians, to live side by side securely and within recognized boundaries. In this regard, it is important that both parties abide by their previous agreements and obligations, and take concrete steps to build confidence.

In conclusion Mr. President, permit me to convey our appreciation to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has played a vital role in providing essential humanitarian relief and development assistance to the Palestinian population, for sixty years. The work carried out by UNRWA under difficult conditions and constraints is commendable. We also wish well, the outgoing Commissioner-General Ms. Karen AbuZayd, who has, over her tenure as Commissioner-General, relentlessly contributed to this worthy cause.

I thank you,

\*\*\*\*\*