

*Permanent Observer Mission
of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

(Check against delivery)

Statement by

**H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas
President of the State of Palestine**

at

**the General Debate of
the United Nations General Assembly
at its 70th Session**

**New York
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In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly,
H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies, Heads of Delegations
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I come before you today from Palestine, compelled to sound the alarm about the grave dangers of what is happening in Jerusalem, where extremist Israeli groups are committing repeated, systematic incursions upon Al-Aqsa Mosque, aimed at imposing a new reality and dividing Al-Haram Al-Sharif temporarily, allowing extremists, under the protection of Israeli occupying forces and accompanying ministers and Knesset members, to enter the Mosque at certain times, while preventing Muslim worshipers from accessing and entering the Mosque at those times and freely exercising their religious rights.

This is the scheme that the Israeli Government is pursuing, in direct violation of the status quo since before 1967 and thereafter. By doing so, the occupying Power is committing a grave mistake, because we will not accept this, and the Palestinian people will not allow the implementation of this illegal scheme, which is aggravating the sensitivities of Palestinians and Muslims everywhere.

I call on the Israeli Government, before it is too late, to cease its use of brutal force to impose its plans to undermine the Islamic and Christian sanctities in Jerusalem, particularly its actions at Al-Aqsa Mosque, for such actions will convert the conflict from a political to religious one, creating an explosive in Jerusalem and in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to come before you to speak on behalf of the State of Palestine before your esteemed General Assembly in this session, which coincides with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, which has made the promotion and protection of international peace and security and the preservation of human rights its most central goals.

The question of Palestine was one of the first just issues brought before the United Nations from the time of its inception, and yet it remains unresolved until this moment, as the organization and its Members continue to be unable to end this injustice inflicted upon our people and to assist our people to exercise their right to self-determination and freedom in their independent and sovereign State.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I ask you to consider the history of the question of Palestine and the relevant United Nations resolutions to realize the obvious truth: that a historic injustice has been inflicted upon a

people and a homeland, a people that had lived peacefully in their land and made genuine intellectual, cultural and humanitarian contributions to mankind. This people do not deserve to be deprived of their homeland, to die in exile or be swallowed by the sea, or to spend their lives fleeing from one refugee camp to another. Yet regrettably, their just cause remains at a standstill after the passage of all these years.

Our people have placed their hopes on the countries of this organization to help them to gain their freedom, independence and sovereignty, so that their wish and right to their own State, like all other peoples of the Earth, can be achieved, along with a just solution for the Palestine refugee issue in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are calling for rightness, justice and peace. While Palestine was partitioned into two States - according to which Israel was established 67 years ago - the second part of that resolution still awaits implementation. Palestine, which is an observer State in the United Nations, deserves full recognition and full membership. It is unreasonable and painful - in light of all the enormous sacrifices we have made, our patience over all of these years of exile and suffering, and our acceptance to make peace according to the two-State solution based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Quartet Roadmap - that the question of Palestine unjustly remains unresolved.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Continuation of the status quo is completely unacceptable because it means surrender to the logic of the brute force being inflicted by the Israeli Government, as it continues its illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem, and continues its blockade of the Gaza Strip, deepening the immense suffering of our people there, in defiance of United Nations resolutions and the agreements signed between the two sides under international auspices. We recall here the words of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1976, when he stated that Israel will become an apartheid State if it continues its occupation of the Palestinian Territory and described the Israeli settlements on Palestinian land as "cancer".

The persistence of this matter prompts us to ask: do the votes by democratic countries against Palestine-related resolutions and the legitimate rights of our people serve peace and those who believe in the two-State solution? Or do they serve and encourage extremists and increase their hatred and racism, making them believe that they are above the law, to the point where they commit the burning of a Palestinian family in the town of Duma in the West Bank, claiming the lives of an infant, Ali Dawabsheh, and his father and mother? What is left of this family is an orphan child, Ahmed, 4-year old, who lies between life and death in the hospital as a result of his burns, while the killers remain free and have not yet been arrested.

This is not the first crime. Before, they burned alive and killed the Palestinian child, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, in Jerusalem, and the child Mohammed Al-Dura in Gaza, and before them thousands have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank. And, we still remember the Deir

Yassin massacre and all of the crimes against our people that have passed without punishment. For how long will Israel remain above international law and without accountability?

Due to the time constraints, I shall not be able to discuss in detail how many Israeli violations are being committed against our people and how many repressive laws have been issued by successive Israeli governments, the latest of which is the formal legislation of instructions to fire live ammunition at and arrest and repress peaceful Palestinian demonstrators, as it continues to impose this illegal occupation.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We do not respond to the Israeli occupation's hatred and brutality with the same. Instead, we are working on spreading the culture of peace and coexistence between our people and in our region, and we are anxious to realize it and to witness the day when all of the people in our region will enjoy peace, security, stability and prosperity. This cannot be achieved with the continuation of the occupation, settlement colonization, the wall, the burning of people, places of worship and homes, the killing youth, children and infants, the burning of crops, and the arrest and detention of people without charge or trial.

How can a State claiming to be an oasis of democracy and claiming that its courts and security apparatus function according to the law accept the existence of a so-called "price tag" gangs and other terrorist organizations that terrorize our people, their property and holy sites, all under the sight of the Israeli army and police, which do not deter or punish, but rather provide them with protection.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Is it not time to end this injustice? Is it not time to stop this suffering? Is it not time for the racist annexation wall to be dismantled? Is it not time for the humiliating and degrading checkpoints and barriers set up by the Israeli occupying forces in our land to be removed, for the Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip to be lifted, and for our people to move in freedom and dignity in their own homeland and outside? Is it not time to end the racist, terrorist, colonial settlement of our land, which is destroying the two-State solution? Is it not the time for the six thousand Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails to see the light of freedom and to live among their families and communities? Is it not the time for the longest occupation in history suffocating our people to come to an end?

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite all the obstacles imposed by the occupation, we, since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, and until this moment, have worked incessantly to build the foundations of our State, its infrastructure and sovereign national institutions. We have made real progress on the ground, as affirmed by several international bodies, especially the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund. We will continue our efforts and work, with the support of our brothers and friends, to strengthen our State, committed to international standards, the rule of law and transparency as a democratic and modern State. In this context, we

highly value the efforts of the AHLC, under Norway's chairmanship, and urge donor countries to continue to support a better life for our people and our efforts to develop our State institutions.

In this context, our accession to membership of international organizations and treaties and conventions, is not directed against any one, but rather aimed at safeguarding our rights, protecting our people, harmonizing the laws and regulations of our country with international standards, and strengthening its international legal status and identity.

As for the internal Palestinian situation, we are determined to preserve the unity of our land and our people. We will not accept temporary solutions or a fragmented State. We seek to form a national unity government that functions according to the program of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and we seek to hold presidential and legislative elections.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Palestine is a country of holiness and peace. It is the birthplace of Christ, the messenger of love and peace, and the *Isra'* and *Mi'raj* (ascension to heaven and night journey) of Mohammed, peace be upon him, who was sent as a mercy unto the world. This is Palestine that is still looking for peace, and its people want to live in their homeland in safety, security, harmony, stability and good neighborliness with all peoples and countries of the region. This is attested to by their cultural, humanitarian and spiritual contributions to humanity from the start.

Recently, on 17 May 2015, two nuns from Palestine, Alphonsine Ghattas and Mariam Baouardy, were canonized as saints by His Holiness Pope Francis at the Vatican in the presence of tens of thousands of the faithful from around the globe. The flag of Palestine was raised at the Vatican, which recognized the State of Palestine, as documented in the agreement signed between the Holy See and the State of Palestine.

We aspire to see the independent State of Palestine taking its rightful place among the community of nations, and we are confident that it will actively contribute to the achievement of economic, cultural, and humanitarian progress of civilization, with positive effects on our people, the region and the world.

It is from Palestine, and with Palestine, that peace will be achieved.

Here, I wish to express, on behalf of our people, deepest gratitude to the countries that voted in favor of the resolution enabling us today to raise the flag of the State of Palestine at United Nations Headquarters. The day is not far when we will raise the flag of Palestine in East Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Palestine.

I wish also to pay tribute to the recent decisions by the European parliaments that have clearly condemned Israel's settlement activities and its products and affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to sovereignty and independence in their State alongside the State of Israel, and that also established a Committee on the relations with Palestine.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Several European countries and parliaments also affirmed their recognition of the State of Palestine, reaffirming our natural right to independence. In this regard, we thank the Kingdom of Sweden for its courage and recognition of the State of Palestine. Indeed, the countries that say they support the two-State solution must recognize the two States, not just one.

Today, I appeal to those countries that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine yet, to do so. We are confident that they will do so, based on conviction in the justice deserved by our people and their cause.

From this rostrum at the United Nations and in this period of religious holidays, I also extend a sincere call to the people of Israel for peace based on justice, security and stability for all. I must also call again on the Security Council and the General Assembly to uphold their responsibilities before it is too late and the chances for peace are lost.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are all aware that Israel undermined the efforts made by the administration of President Barack Obama in past years, most recently the efforts of Secretary of State John Kerry aimed at reaching a peace agreement through negotiations. The policies and practices of the Israeli Government and the positions of its Prime Minister and cabinet members lead to a clear conclusion: it is working extremely hard to destroy the two-State solution that we are seeking on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We welcome the international and European efforts, including the French initiative calling for the formation of an international support group for the achievement of peace. In their recent summit, the Arab States confirmed their support for a resolution by the Security Council that reaffirms the clear parameters for a peaceful solution in accordance with the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and that sets a timeframe for ending the occupation. It is no longer useful to waste time in negotiations for the sake of negotiations; what is required is to mobilize international efforts to oversee an end to the occupation in line with the resolutions of international legitimacy. Until then, I call upon the United Nations to provide international protection for the Palestinian people in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have tried to oblige Israel to implement the signed agreements and to negotiate in conformity with the two-State solution through direct contacts with the Israeli Government, as well as through the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union, and the United Nations (the Quartet members) and other parties. However, the Israeli Government insists on continuing its destruction of the two-State solution and on entrenchment of two regimes on the ground: an apartheid regime that is currently imposed on the territory of the State of Palestine

and against the Palestinian people on the one hand, and another regime of privileges and protection to the Israeli settlers on the other hand.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The transitional Oslo Agreement and its annexes, and the subsequent agreements signed with Israel, stipulated that the agreements would be implemented within five years, ending in 1999 with full independence for the State of Palestine and the termination of the Israeli occupation. But Israel stopped the completion of the process of withdrawing its forces from areas classified as "B" and "C", which represent more than 60% of the territory of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Instead, it intensified its settlement activities everywhere. Since the speech of President Obama in Cairo in 2009, in which he called for the cessation of settlement activities, the Israeli Government increased settlement activities by at least 20%, violating its obligation not to undertake any action illegally and unilaterally that would prejudice the final solution. Moreover, the occupying Power has repeatedly infringed upon the areas classified "A", which are supposed to be under full Palestinian security jurisdiction and in which we have developed the institutions of the Palestinian State.

At the same time, as Israel refuses to review the economic agreements that control the ability of the Palestinian economy to develop and be independent, it is determined to impose dominance on our economy, similar to its military and security dominance, and rejects the right of the Palestinian people to development and to their natural resources. As such, Israel has destroyed the foundations upon which the political and security agreements are based, which have also been undermined by the measures taken by successive Israeli governments that have negated the transitional phase aimed at realizing the independence of our State, and has perpetrated gross violations, which have made the situation unsustainable.

Thus, we declare that as long as Israel refuses to commit to the agreements signed with us, which render us an authority without real powers, and as long as Israel refuses to cease settlement activities and to release of the fourth group of Palestinian prisoners in accordance with our agreements, they leave us no choice but to insist that we will not remain the only ones committed to the implementation of these agreements, while Israel continuously violates them. We therefore declare that we cannot continue to be bound by these agreements and that Israel must assume all of its responsibilities as an occupying Power, because the status quo cannot continue and the decisions of the Palestinian Central Council last March are specific and binding.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The State of Palestine, based on the 4th of June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, is a State under occupation, as was the case for many countries during World War II. Our State is recognized by 137 countries around the world and the right of our people to self-determination, freedom and independence is recognized globally as being inalienable and unquestionable.

I further recall General Assembly resolution 67/19 of 2012, which accorded to Palestine Observer State status, reaffirmed that the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation

Organization would be the interim government of the State of Palestine and that the Palestinian National Council is the Palestinian parliament of the State of Palestine.

I must reiterate: the current situation is unsustainable. Our people need genuine hope and need to see credible efforts for ending this conflict, ending their misery and achieving their rights. We will start the implementation of this declaration by all peaceful and legal means. Either the Palestinian National Authority will be the conduit of the Palestinian people from occupation to independence, or Israel, the occupying Power, must bear all of its responsibilities.

At the same time, and based on our commitment to the principles of international law, the State of Palestine will continue in its efforts to accede to international conventions and organizations, and it will move forward in the defense of its people under occupation through all available legal and peaceful means, including as a High Contracting Party to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and a State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Those who fear international law and international courts must cease committing all crimes.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My hands remain outstretched for the just peace that will guarantee my people's rights, freedom and human dignity. I say to our neighbors, the Israeli people that peace is in your interest, in our interest, and in the interest of our future generations. Narrow vision is destructive. I hope that you will consider the dangerous reality on the ground and look to the future and accept for the Palestinian people what you accept for yourselves. Then, you will find that the achievement of peace will be possible, and you will enjoy security, safety, peace and stability. These are the aspirations that we also seek to realize for the Palestinian people.

I thank you for your kind attention.

May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.