



Press Release

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UN INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO SUPPORT MIDDLE EAST PEACE TO CONVENE IN NICOSIA, CYPRUS, 16 - 17 APRIL

NGO Meeting in Solidarity with Palestinian People to Take Place on 18 April

NEW YORK, 10 April (Department of Political Affairs) -- The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will convene the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace in Nicosia, on 16 and 17 April. The Meeting will be followed, on 18 April, by a United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Both events will be held in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [56/33](#) and [56/34](#) of 3 December 2001.

For the past several months, the Committee has been increasingly concerned over the rapid escalation of the crisis, the tragic loss of innocent lives, wide-scale destruction of Palestinian property in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the disastrous state of the Palestinian economy. The Committee firmly believes that the international community has a moral responsibility towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, based on Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#) and, most recently, resolution [1397 \(2002\)](#). The Committee's position of principle is that the United Nations should maintain its permanent responsibility towards all the aspects of the question of Palestine, until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and norms of international law, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

The Meeting in Nicosia will focus on promoting support for international efforts to contain the current crisis and restoring the political process. Experts will assess the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, review various initiatives aimed at resuming the peace dialogue, and discuss the urgency of addressing the root causes of the conflict. Invited to the Meeting were eminent personalities, including high-level officials from the host Government and the Palestinian Authority, internationally renowned experts, including Israelis and Palestinians, representatives of United Nations Members and observers, representatives of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental organizations, the academic community, representatives of non-governmental and other civil society organizations, as well as the media.

The delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will consist of Ambassador Papa Louis Fall (Senegal), Chairman; Ambassador Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman; Ambassador Ravan A.G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Ambassador Walter Balzan (Malta), Rapporteur; Ambassador Sotirios Zackheos (Cyprus); and Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

The opening session will take place on Tuesday, 16 April 2002, at 10:30 a.m. in the Cypria Conference Room of the Hotel Forum Nicosia. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, will deliver the opening address. Statements will also be made by the representative of the United Nations Secretary-General Karen Koning AbuZayd, Deputy Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); Papa Louis Fall, Chairman of the Committee; the representative of Palestine; and other eminent personalities.

This will be followed by a segment in which representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies and agencies interested in and active on the issue will be invited to make statements.

Plenary I, entitled "The occupied Palestinian territory since September 2000", will start at 3 p.m., Tuesday, 16 April. Presentations will be made by, among others, Kamal Al-Sharafy, member of the Palestinian Council; Hadas Ziv, Director of Projects at Physicians for Human Rights, Israel; and Seth Ackerman, Media Analyst at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting in New York. The presentations will be followed by a discussion with participants.

Plenary II, entitled "International efforts at containing the crisis", will start at 10 a.m., Wednesday, 17 April. Scheduled speakers include Hanna Siniora, Publisher of *The Jerusalem Times*; Uri Avnery, former member of the Knesset and a member of Gush Shalom (The Israeli Peace Bloc); Henry Siegman, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York; Oleg Ozerov, Deputy Chief of the Middle East Peace Process Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Markus Kaim, Professor of Political Science at Friedrich-Schiller-University in Germany; and Joseph S. Joseph, Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Cyprus. A broader discussion will follow.

Plenary III, entitled "The urgency of ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a Palestinian State", will start at 3 p.m., Wednesday, 17 April. Speakers include Gabi Baramki, President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace in Ramallah; Peretz Kidron, journalist and peace activist in

Jerusalem; Steingrímur Hermannsson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Millennium Institute and former Prime Minister of Iceland; and Sir Cyril Townsend, Director of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding in London. The presentations will be followed by a broader discussion.

The closing session will take place at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, 17 April.

The official languages of the Meeting will be Arabic, English and French.

Invitations to attend the Meeting have been sent to all United Nations Member States and observers, United Nations agencies, bodies and programmes, as well as interested intergovernmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) accredited to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and a number of other NGOs interested in the subject, have been invited to attend the Meeting, as well.

NGO representatives will have the opportunity to discuss in greater detail the role of civil society vis-à-vis the question of Palestine at the United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to be held at the same venue on Thursday, 18 April, starting at 10 a.m.

The report of the Meeting will later be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat.

Participants, including media representatives, are requested to register and to obtain photo badges prior to entering the conference room. A registration area will be set up in the foyer to the Cypria Conference Room. Advance registration will be held on Friday, 12 April, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on Monday, 15 April, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Registration on Tuesday, 16 April, will start at 9 a.m. Participants are kindly requested to take advantage of the advance registration in order to avoid delays on Tuesday morning, prior to the opening of the Meeting.

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