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## Voicing solidarity with Palestinian cause, UN officials stress importance of resumed peace talks

25 November 2013 – United Nations officials today voiced their solidarity with the people of Palestine in their aspirations for independence and sovereignty, and stressed the importance of ongoing peace talks aimed at a two-State solution which must be given a chance to bear fruit.

"We cannot afford to lose the current moment of opportunity," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [said](#) in a message read on his behalf to the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

"I ask all in the international community to work together to translate the solidarity expressed on this occasion into positive action for peace and justice," he added. The special meeting held at UN Headquarters comes ahead of the International Day, observed annually on 29 November. The Day marks the date in 1947 when the General Assembly adopted a resolution partitioning then-mandated Palestine into two States, one Jewish and one Arab.

"The goal remains clear – an end to the occupation that started in 1967 and the creation of a sovereign, independent, and viable State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, living side by side in peace with a secure State of Israel," Mr. Ban stated.

"Jerusalem is to emerge from negotiations as the capital of two States, with arrangements for the holy sites acceptable to all. An agreed solution must be found for millions of Palestinian refugees around the region."

Israelis and Palestinians resumed direct negotiations in August, thanks to the efforts of United States Secretary of State John Kerry, following a three-year hiatus owing to Israel's refusal to extend its freeze on settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory.

After decades of talks and "far too many" adverse developments on the ground, Mr. Ban urged Palestinian and Israeli leaders to take the decisions that will usher in a political solution to this serious and long-standing conflict.

The Chair of the General Assembly's Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Abdou Salam Diallo, called on the international community to seize "what seems to be one of the last opportunities" to promote a negotiated solution.

"Time is running out. The negotiating process is endangered by certain policies and particularly by the ongoing establishment of Jewish settlements," he told the meeting.

Later today, Mr. Diallo will introduce several draft resolutions related to the question of Palestine to the General Assembly, which will be asked to, among other things, declare 2014 as the "International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People."

General Assembly President John Ashe welcomed the Committee's initiative to have 2014 proclaimed as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and called for using it to redouble efforts to create the necessary environment for successful peace talks.

"Ongoing peace negotiations must be given a chance for peace to take root and flourish, but peace cannot be meaningful and durable without taking fully into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which are key to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East."

"I call on the Governments and people of both Israel and Palestine to avoid actions that would undermine the fragile hope created by this renewed round of negotiations, and to cease and desist from any actions that are in contravention to international law and would pose a major impediment to peace in the Middle East and, more importantly, render the two-State solution impossible," [said](#) Mr. Ashe.

Speaking on behalf of the UN agency responsible for assisting five million Palestinian refugees, Filippo Grandi said that solidarity – which transcends political and financial support – is crucial because it makes Palestinians feel that they are not alone.

Mr. Grandi, the outgoing Commissioner General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), said his organization is "sadly familiar" with this loneliness, given how closely it works with refugees whose plight has remained unresolved for over six decades.

As part of the observance of the International Day, the Palestinian Rights Committee will hold a concert later today featuring two Palestinian singers – Mohammed Assaf, UNRWA Regional Youth Ambassador and Winner of Arab Idol 2013, and Nai Barghouti.

The Committee is also screening the documentary film "State 194," which focuses on former Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's 2009 plan to demonstrate that his people were deserving of statehood, inspiring them to change their destiny and seek UN membership.