



**Secretary-General**  
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**ISRAELIS, PALESTINIANS MUST BREAK OUT OF 'ZERO-SUM MENTALITY', EMBRACE PEACEFUL**

**PATH FORWARD, SAYS SECRETARY-GENERAL TO RIGHTS COMMITTEE**

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in New York today.

Sixty-five years ago, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181, proposing the partition of the mandate territory into two States. Sixty-five years later, this vision of a two-State solution remains tragically unfulfilled.

During my recent trip to the Middle East following the dangerous escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel, I saw yet again the disastrous consequences of the absence of a permanent resolution of the conflict.

Palestinians and Israelis spoke to me about the horror of living in fear of the next attack and the next disruption of their normal lives. They voiced despair at what seems to be the receding prospects for lives of dignity and calm.

The Middle East is changing rapidly and profoundly. It is more urgent than ever for the international community and the parties to intensify efforts towards peace.

This date, 29 November, has great meaning for both sides. This year it takes on added significance, with the Palestinian decision to seek non-Member Observer State status through a vote in the General Assembly later today.

The outlines of an end to the conflict are clear. We know them well. They are laid out in United Nations Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, including land for peace, the Road Map, and existing agreements between the parties. I would also like to stress the importance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.

What is needed now is political will and courage. Leaders must show a sense of historic responsibility and vision. Israelis and Palestinians must break out of a zero-sum mentality, and embrace a peaceful path forward. That is the best hope for both peoples. Young people, in particular, should be given reason to look to the future with expectation, not with resignation at the certainty of prolonged conflict.

Final status issues can be resolved only through direct negotiations. Violence is not the way; it only breeds more hatred and bitterness. Much work lies ahead to create the conditions for the resumption of meaningful negotiations and to preserve the viability of the two-State solution.

It is crucial to sustain the ceasefire concluded last week that ended more than one week of devastating violence in Gaza and southern Israel. There must be no rocket fire from Gaza, which I have condemned repeatedly. There is no justification for indiscriminate attacks against civilian targets.

Issues that have been pending since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) almost three years ago must be deferred no longer: ending the closure, preventing the illicit trafficking of arms and achieving intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

Palestinian unity that supports a negotiated two-State solution is essential to achieve a just and lasting peace for the creation of a Palestinian State in Gaza and the West Bank. It is equally important to preserve and support the commendable achievements of the Palestinian Authority's State-building efforts.

Continued settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is a violation of international law and the Road Map. These activities must cease. Unilateral actions on the ground will not be accepted by the international community and will not be allowed to prejudice the outcome of negotiations.

I share the deep and, indeed, global frustration that the two-State solution seems ever more distant. The cost of the continued stalemate rises with each passing day and with each missed opportunity.

This is the complex and wrenching backdrop — historic and present-day — against which the Palestinians have decided to seek non-Member Observer State status in the General Assembly. This is a matter for United Nations Member States to decide. It is important for all concerned to approach this responsibly and

constructively.

Efforts should be focused on preserving the commendable achievements of the Palestinian Authority on the ground, and on relaunching meaningful negotiations, which are the only way to resolve all permanent status issues.

Our priority remains to do the painstaking work of realizing the just and lasting peace for which generations of Palestinians and Israelis have longed — a peace that ends the occupation that started in 1967 and ensures that an independent, viable and sovereign State of Palestine lives side by side with a secure State of Israel.

I call on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to breathe new life into the peace process, which is now on life support. I urge the international community to help them forge a credible political path that will realize the legitimate aspirations of both sides. I pledge to do everything in my power to support this goal.

On this International Day, I count on all involved to work together to translate solidarity into positive action for peace.

Thank you.

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