



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

**SPECIAL BULLETIN ON
THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY
WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE
2012**

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I. COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 29 November 2012, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, as well as in several other cities, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

All States Members of the United Nations, observers, intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies were invited to attend the special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

At the meeting, statements were made by Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal), Chair of the Committee; Vuk Jeremić (Serbia), President of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly; Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations; and Hardeep Singh Puri (India), President of the Security Council for the month of November 2012. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, Riad Malki, read out a message on behalf of Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the State of Palestine. In addition, Palitha T.B. Kohona (Sri Lanka) made a statement in his capacity as Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

In addition, Mohammad Khazaei, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, delivered a message from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; Kadr Ahmed Hassan, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Djibouti to the United Nations, read out a message from Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Djibouti, in his capacity as Chair of the thirty-ninth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); Tête António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, made a statement on behalf of the African Union; and Ahmed Fathalla, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, delivered a message from Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. Roger Waters, jury member of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, also addressed the meeting on behalf of civil society organizations active on the question of Palestine.

Closing remarks were made by Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People received messages from 24 Heads of State, 4 Heads of Government, 3 Governments and 9 Ministers for Foreign Affairs, as well as from the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Messages were received from 4 non-governmental organizations.

The special meeting was followed by the showing of a film entitled *Walled Horizons*, narrated by Roger Waters.

A Palestinian art exhibit, "Palestine: memories, dreams, perseverance", was presented under the auspices of the Committee in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

At the United Nations Office at Geneva, a special meeting was held on 29 November 2012. The meeting was chaired by Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who opened the meeting by reading the message of Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Office at Geneva, spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Statements were also made by Ravinatha Pandukabhaya Aryasinha, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office at Geneva, who read the message of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories; Obaid Salem Saeed Al Zaabi, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations Office at Geneva, who read the statement of the League of Arab States; Slimane Chikh, Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; Seyed Mohammad Reza Sajjadi, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who read a statement on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; Georges-Rémi Namekong, representing the African Union; and Nagham Nassar, reading a statement on behalf of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs): World Young Women's Christian Association, Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and General Arab Women Federation. Ibrahim Khraishi, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva, read a statement on behalf of Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the State of Palestine.

At the United Nations Office at Vienna, a special meeting was held on 29 November 2012. Colin Scicluna, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations Office at Vienna, opened the meeting and spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Mazlan Othman, Deputy Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, delivered the message of Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. Gerhard Jandl, Political Director in the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs of Austria, read a message on behalf of the host country and Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office at Vienna, spoke on behalf of the Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Zuheir El-Wazer, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Vienna, read a message on behalf of Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the State of Palestine. Other speakers included Mikhail Wehbe, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office at Vienna; Khaled Abdelrahman Shamaa, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations Office at Vienna, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Group in Vienna; Xolisa Mfundiso Mabhongo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations Office at Vienna, on behalf of the African Group; Dato' Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Bin Yaakob, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, who read a statement on behalf of Malaysia; Ali El Mhamdi, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations Office at Vienna, who delivered a statement on behalf of the Council of Arab Ambassadors in Vienna; Isolda Alicia de la Paz Frixione Miranda, Alternate Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations Office at Vienna, who spoke in her national capacity; and Hans Köchler, President of the International Progress Organization, who spoke on behalf of civil society organizations active on the question of Palestine. A film on Palestine was screened after the meeting, followed by a performance by a Palestinian folkloric group.

II. TEXTS OF STATEMENTS MADE AND MESSAGES DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, 2012

Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal), Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

As we officially open this solemn meeting, the new tragedy that has struck Gaza and its surrounding areas is still fresh in our minds. On many occasions, we have drawn the attention of the Security Council to the dangerous situation in the territories. Yet, the international community has not been able to find the means for a new impetus to restore peace in time.

The Committee has strongly condemned the violent attacks launched by the Israeli army against Gaza, which has already endured so much suffering. The Committee has also denounced just as strongly the indiscriminate rocket fire originating from Gaza. Never has peace been more essential for all the peoples of the region; yet, never has it seemed so far out of reach.

We are meeting here once again to mark the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, commemorated on the anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations partition plan in 1947. The Day provides us with an opportunity to review the decades that have passed, during which almost everything has been tried, in vain, to establish a definitive peace. The promises to bring justice to all the peoples of the subregion, including the Palestinian people, have languished year after year, to the great distress of the 5 million refugees who still await, in exile, a solution to their tragic fate.

The year 1967 marked the beginning of the Israeli occupation, which will soon have lasted 50 years. During the 1990s, the Oslo Accords brought hope by laying the foundation for a transition that was to be completed by the year 2000. The Quartet road map, for its part, provided that the two-State solution would be in effect by 2005 at the latest. Nothing of significance came out of those deadlines, in which the Palestinians had placed great hopes. Peace initiatives vanished into thin air one after another. In the meantime, settlements, which at the beginning numbered a few dozen settlers, have grown to more than half a million inhabitants, leaving less and less room for the future Palestinian State.

Palestinians feel cheated. They are tired of promises not kept, dulled by soothing speeches, weary of awaiting their hour. The Palestinians need their own State, here and now. Every year, they are asked to be patient because international diplomacy is on the verge of making the final advance that will change their lives. They do not want to wait any longer; they cannot wait any longer.

The public institutions that Palestinians have built with the help of the international community are disintegrating for lack of funding. The sealing-off of territories and the withholding of tax revenues from the Palestinian Authority have had disastrous consequences for the functioning of those institutions. We would like to take this opportunity to urge donors to continue to provide assistance and to intensify it as a matter of urgency. I would now like to turn to the topical question of the admission of Palestine to the United Nations as a non-Member observer State. Although some Member States could be sceptical about the wisdom of the change in strategy by the Palestinians concerning the modification of their status at the United Nations, no one can dispute the legitimacy of their approach. The right of Palestinians to self-determination, independence and national

sovereignty in their own State is undeniable. The General Assembly confirms that year after year by an overwhelming majority.

I would like to call on participants to consider the new request by the Palestinians while bearing in mind all that I have just recalled. The United Nations has permanent obligations regarding the question of Palestine; Member States do as well, some more than others for historical reasons. I would further urge participants to show their solidarity by voting in favour of the four draft resolutions that I will submit to the General Assembly this afternoon under the agenda item entitled “Question of Palestine” (A/67/L.17, A/67/L.18, A/67/L.19 and A/67/L.20).

The Committee will continue to fulfil the mission entrusted to it by the General Assembly as long as the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are not being fully respected. We will remain mobilized in favour of a definitive settlement of the conflict based on a two-State solution that is just and lasting and allows Israel and Palestine to live side by side in peace and security.

Vuk Jeremić (Serbia), President
of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly

[Original: English]

It is a great privilege to participate in the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on this historic date. This is an emotional occasion for me personally, given my ancestors’ legacy. They are no longer with us, but we are with them, and proudly so. It is truly an honour, President Abbas, to have you with us.

I would like to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its dedicated work and for convening this meeting, as it has every year since 1978.

The quest to fulfil the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people is the item that has remained on the agenda of the General Assembly longer than any other. Nearly 70 years since the plenary’s adoption of resolution 181 (II) in 1947, a two-State solution has still not come to pass. Millions of Palestinians continue to live in poverty in the myriad camps scattered throughout the Middle East. My deeply held view is that that is one of the world’s most fundamental wrongs. It contradicts the central tenet of the Charter of the United Nations: to create a workable international system that not only helps to prevent conflicts but also asserts the pre-eminence of justice, pledging not only equal rights to all nations but ensuring their equal dignity as well.

At the start of my term in office, I called on Member States to work together so that this session of the General Assembly may go down in history as an Assembly of peace. On this occasion, when the United Nations solemnly observes the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I renew that call.

I know how deep the feelings of injustice may rightfully be, but focusing exclusively on such a sentiment will not close the book on an era of enmity in the Middle East. At this delicate moment, we must try to avoid bitter and self-perpetuating divisions and their accompanying calls for more and more vengeance.

The horrors of the past inevitably shape who we are but, unless we are ready to tame and eventually overcome them, the future is not likely to be any different. I am convinced that the

courage to reach out across the divide can be found, so that the wounds can heal and the region can finally come to prosper in peace and security.

Over the past few weeks, we have witnessed a new wave of strife in Gaza. I praise the valiant efforts to help broker a truce by His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Morsy, President of Egypt; His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General; The Honourable Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States of America; and others. However, the recent upsurge in violence reminds us of the urgency of the task that now must follow: to resume peaceful negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestinian statehood. The suffering in the Holy Land must come to an end.

I am grateful to the Committee for its continuing role in focusing the attention of the General Assembly and the rest of the United Nations system on the tragic plight of the Palestinian people. Its consistent promotion of their inalienable rights and its support for the Middle East peace process remain critical, as are its efforts to mobilize international assistance to those who need it most. In a few hours' time, the General Assembly will consider a draft resolution to renew the mandates of the Committee and the respective Secretariat units. But it will also take up for the first time a draft resolution to accord to Palestine the status of a non-Member observer State in the United Nations.

This is going to be a historic day. Whatever the result of the vote, it will be crucial for the Palestinians and Israelis to transform its effects into an opportunity — an opportunity to return to the negotiating table, actively supported by all who can help bring them closer together. The goal must be to repair the breach, and to achieve at long last what was envisioned in 1947: a just and comprehensive settlement; a two-State solution.

I come to the end of my remarks by recalling the eloquence of a great classical poet, and his timeless entreaty to “bring to pass that the savage works of war may be stilled to rest throughout all seas and lands” so that one day soon, the State of Israel may live in security and the State of Palestine may take its dignified and rightful place in the world family of nations.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

[Original: English]

Sixty-five years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), proposing the partition of the Mandate territory into two States. Sixty-five years later, that 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 of the next disruption to their normal lives. They voiced despair at what seem to be 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 Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, including that of 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 a reason to look to the future with expectation, not with resignation at the certainty of a 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 on 21 November, which ended more than a week of devastating violence in Gaza and southern Israel. There must be no rocket fire from Gaza. I have condemned it 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 State-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority.

Continued settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is a violation of international law and the road map. Such 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 the 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.

That is the complex and wrenching backdrop, past and present, against which the Palestinians have decided to seek non-Member observer State status in the General Assembly. It is a matter for States Members of the United Nations to decide. It is important for all concerned to approach the decision responsibly and constructively.

Efforts should be focused on preserving the commendable achievements of the Palestinian Authority on the ground and on relaunched meaningful negotiations. That is the only way to resolve all permanent status issues.

Our priority remains to undertake 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 started in 1967 and ensures an independent, viable and sovereign State of Palestine living 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 to forge a credible political path that will realize the legitimate aspirations of both sides. I pledge to do everything in my power to support that goal.

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

**Hardeep Singh Puri (India), President of
the Security Council for the month of November 2012**

[Original: English]

Let me begin by thanking the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me, in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November, to address this meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Security Council remains committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. The Security Council also remains committed to seeking a comprehensive resolution to other Arab-Israeli issues and, in that regard, recalls its previous relevant resolutions and notes the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative.

Throughout the past year, developments in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remained prominent on the Council's agenda. The Council has remained seized of those issues, has continued to receive monthly briefings on the situation from the Special Coordinator of the Secretary-General and from the Department of Political Affairs and has held regular open debates. The Council also discussed these issues at a high-level meeting held during the month of September on strengthening the relationship between the Council and the League of Arab States. In the context of recent hostilities affecting the Gaza Strip and Israel, the Council also held a private meeting on 14 November (see S/PV.6863).

The application by Palestine for membership of the United Nations was one of the main issues considered by the Security Council and its Standing Committee on Admission of New Members in the last quarter of the year 2011. The issue remains before the Council following adoption of the report by the Committee on Admission of New Members in November 2011 (S/2011/705). Early this year, the Council also discussed an invitation extended on behalf of President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian leadership for the Council to undertake a visit to the region.

Over the course of the year, members of the Council expressed concern at, and many condemned, the steady expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, terming them as illegal under international law or illegitimate. The members also reiterated their view that such actions undermined peace efforts and the viability of the two-State solution, and stressed the need for respect of international obligations in that regard.

Despite several commendable bilateral and multilateral initiatives leading to some notable developments, the Council members regret to note that direct talks between the parties have not resumed. Council members have repeatedly stressed the importance of resuming Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and encouraged both sides to keep up direct contact so as to maintain positive momentum towards the resumption of dialogue and negotiations.

Council members continue to view the situation in Gaza with concern, and repeat their calls for the full implementation of resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009) and, in that context, they stress the need for a sustained and regular flow of goods and people to Gaza, an end to the smuggling of weapons and rockets, and the unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza. Council members also continue to express concern at, and many have condemned, the firing of rockets from Gaza into southern Israel. In a statement to the press on 21 November (SC/10829), the Council welcomed the ceasefire agreement reached in relation to the Gaza Strip in order to bring about a sustainable and durable cessation of hostilities affecting the Gaza Strip and Israel. The Council also expressed its continued support for the ongoing international efforts to consolidate the agreement. The members of the Council also deplored the loss of civilian lives resulting from the recent escalation.

Council members noted the results of the most recent meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, held on 23 September 2012. At that meeting, based on reports and recommendations from the parties, the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Quartet Representative, donors reconfirmed their assessment that the institutions of the Palestinian Authority were above the threshold of a functioning State. Council members welcomed that positive appraisal and stressed the need for the continued strengthening of Palestinian institutions. Council members are also cognizant of the importance of continuing financial support to the Palestinian Authority, in view of its critical financial situation. The past year continued to witness historic developments in the Middle East. The momentous changes across the region have emphasized even further the urgency of realizing a peace agreement that ends the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and resolves all claims. The Security Council has therefore called upon Palestinians and Israelis to seize the opportunity to reach a peaceful and final settlement.

The Security Council expresses the hope that, based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid principles, including land for peace, the road map and the agreements previously reached between the parties, urgent efforts will be made towards a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a solution should end the occupation that began in 1967 and result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its neighbours.

The Security Council has recognized the key role of the Quartet in the efforts to relaunch the Middle East peace process. As well, it has recognized the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative. Council members have expressed their full support for the continued efforts of the Quartet and its statements, including that of 23 September 2011 (SG/2178). The Council urges the parties to work constructively with the Quartet in that endeavour and stresses that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community.

The Security Council remains fully committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within mutually agreed and recognized borders. Council members have underscored that a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians and a final settlement of all core issues can only be achieved through direct negotiations. Council members have also reiterated their support for an agreed, just and fair solution to the refugee issue. The Security Council remains committed to upholding its duties and supporting a credible negotiations process between the parties, aimed at the early conclusion of a peace agreement.

Finally, the Security Council commends the laudable efforts of humanitarian organizations and agencies on the ground, particularly those of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and its staff. The Council encourages all members of the international community to support the Agency with much-needed financial contributions at this critical time. In view of the critical situation on the ground and the need for progress to be made in the political process, the Council will remain seized of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and will continue to consider the issue on a regular basis and act to uphold its responsibilities under the Charter and those consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions on the matter.

In conclusion, allow me to assure all Member States of the commitment of the Security Council to the ultimate goal of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and to the realization of the legitimate and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to an independent and democratic State.

**Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the
Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization;
message read by Riad Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs**

[Original: Arabic]
[Unofficial translation]

On behalf of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership, it is my honour to address the international community on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. As we gather again to commemorate this Day, we do so with pride. We are proud of the resilience of our people in spite of the many long decades of injustice, oppression and hardship, and proud of the strong support for the just cause of Palestine emanating from all corners of the globe. I reaffirm our deepest gratitude to all Member States, civil society and ordinary people from around the world who are standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people and whose unwavering support for the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people has been vital in maintaining our conviction that peace and justice are possible and will one day soon prevail.

We are humbled by this historic support and we say, on this day, that their support is more vital than ever at this critical, decisive moment in time. We appeal to them to stand firm for peace, for the rule of law and for right over might. The time has come for Member States to uphold the principles and words they have committed themselves to over and over. It is high time to find the political will to act resolutely in line with the long-standing positions in support of the inalienable rights of our people, including to self-determination in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and in support of a peaceful, just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the conflict, for which there is clearly no military solution.

We recognize the noble efforts of the United Nations and by its major organs and specialized agencies, including in particular UNRWA, vis-à-vis the question of Palestine, consistent with the permanent responsibility of the United Nations until the question is justly resolved in all its aspects. We express appreciation for the goodwill efforts of His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and for the serious efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in support of the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We are grateful for the strong resolutions adopted in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and other organs and bodies of the United Nations, which are firmly rooted in international law, including humanitarian and human rights law; which have safeguarded the rights of the Palestinian people over the decades; which address all facets of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including, inter alia, the core issues of the Palestine refugees, the right to self-determination, the status of Jerusalem, the illegal Israeli settlement campaign and the unjust blockade against our people in the Gaza Strip; and which repeatedly call for an end to Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, consistent with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the principle of land for peace.

On this, the sixty-fifth anniversary of the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 1947, which partitioned Mandate Palestine into two States, Israel and Palestine, we continue to look to the United Nations and appeal to the international community to uphold that covenant with our people, to allow them to live in freedom and dignity in their homeland and to act in the interest of peace and security in our region. In that regard, we underscore the call in resolution 181 (II) for sympathetic consideration to be given to the application for membership in the United Nations by either State, and recall further that Israel's admission to the United Nations, in 1949, was accompanied by two conditions, namely, Israel's commitment to the partition resolution and the establishment of the Palestinian State. We also underscore resolution 194 (III), which, inter alia, calls for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes and for just compensation.

This year, which marks 45 years since the June 1967 war, in which Israel forcibly occupied the remaining territory of historical Palestine, that is, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, we reiterate that this unjust situation must end. We therefore reiterate our urgent calls on the international community to compel compliance by Israel, the occupying Power, with its legal obligations, the relevant resolutions and its international commitments. Israel cannot continue to be permitted to act without consequence as if it were a State above the law. Serious collective action is required to send a clear message to Israel that it must abide by the law; that it is time for this prolonged, illegitimate occupation to come to an end; and that it is time for the realization of the two-State solution of an independent, sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, thereby ushering in an era of genuine peace and coexistence between our peoples and in our region.

This is a matter of urgency because, in the midst of turbulent crises throughout the region, the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is totally unsustainable and poses the risk of further destabilization, taking us farther away from our shared goal of peace. In that regard, we condemn the recent Israeli aggression against our people in the Gaza Strip and call for protection for our people to ensure that those crimes are not repeated by the occupying Power. We reaffirm our appreciation to all those who contributed to bringing an end to the onslaught, especially Egypt.

The Palestinian leadership continues to act with the utmost responsibility to serve its people and uphold its legal obligations and commitments. It has consistently acted with goodwill for the sake of peace, repeatedly reaffirming its adherence to the long-standing parameters of the peace process — embodied in Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map — and its adherence to the two-State solution.

For many years, we have expressed our readiness to reach a solution to the conflict with Israel that ensures relative justice and conforms with international resolutions and initiatives through the establishment of our Palestinian State on only 22 per cent of the territory of historical Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to reach a just and agreed-upon solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees in accordance with resolution 194 (III). We reaffirm these commitments and that readiness once again today. Despite diminishing hopes and the decline of the situation on the ground due to Israeli violations, we remain committed to the two-State solution, and our hand remains extended in peace.

That is why we have embarked upon the multilateral, peaceful, political initiative that will be considered by the General Assembly this afternoon, to accord non-Member observer State status to Palestine in the United Nations. Our preference remains full membership in the United Nations, which is our legitimate, legal and historic right. We hope that the Security Council will one day soon positively recommend our application to the General Assembly. In the interim, we appeal to Member States for their principled support of the draft resolution (A/67/L.28) today in support of the Palestinian people, in recognition of their State and as an investment in peace. This is indeed a positive, constructive effort aimed at preserving the two-State solution.

On this day, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we affirm that we are a people clinging to our land, and we will remain on it. We have faith that every person in the world with a conscience and every State that respects the Charter of the United Nations will support and contribute to enabling our people to exercise their right to self-determination and to achieve independence in their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**Palitha T.B. Kohona (Sri Lanka), Chair of the Special
Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights
of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories**

[Original: English]

I am honoured to speak today in my capacity as Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the General Assembly underscores the international community's commitment and responsibility to achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Peace in the Middle East has eluded us for far too long, and it is a sad commentary on humankind that we have failed in that pressing task.

A few weeks ago, I presented the forty-fourth report of the Special Committee examining the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/67/550). The Committee was seriously disturbed by the situation in the occupied territories. At the time of our visit in July, in the light of the testimony received by the Committee, we were of the view that the situation on the ground, especially in Gaza, was unsustainable and that renewed violence was likely unless measures were taken immediately to ameliorate conditions. The events of the past few weeks would seem to support the conclusions of the Committee.

The continued demolition of homes and the resultant displacement of Palestinians, the blockade of Gaza and the consequent reliance on illegal smuggling simply to survive led to one

deeply troubling conclusion, namely, that those practices would amount to a strategy to either force the Palestinians off their land or to so severely marginalize them as to establish and maintain a system of permanent occupation.

The Committee was especially concerned about the condition of Palestinian children detained by Israel, who do not benefit from the basic legal, judicial or social safeguards to which they are entitled under international law. Between 500 and 700 Palestinian children are arrested every year. The Committee was particularly disturbed to learn that 12 per cent of those children were kept in solitary confinement.

The Committee called on Israel, consistent with its international law obligations, to adopt the recommendations, among others, relating to the arrest, detention and sentencing of Palestinian children, the demolition of Palestinian homes, the violence against Palestinians by Israeli settlers and the blockade of Gaza. Similarly, the Committee called on Palestinian armed groups to comply with international humanitarian law and cease the indiscriminate firing of rockets and mortars into Israel.

While we welcome last week's suspension of hostilities, we are conscious of the continuing tense situation in Gaza. The international community must not lose sight of the overarching goal of two States living side by side in peace and security. Palestinians and Israelis could enjoy security and peace as neighbours through a political solution with human rights at its heart. We express our deep appreciation for those countries, especially in the region, that have played a key role in arranging for the cessation of hostilities.

**Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of
the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; message delivered by Mohammad Khazaei,
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

Once again, we would like to show our solidarity with the Palestinian people and reflect on the tragedy of that people in the context of the illegal occupation of its territory by Israel. We reaffirm our determination to redouble efforts to peacefully, justly and comprehensively resolve the question of Palestine, including the adverse situation of its refugees, in accordance with the rules and principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has historically raised its voice in numerous international forums to support the Palestinian people in their just claim to a sovereign and independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. In that context, the Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting at the Movement's sixteenth summit, held in Tehran in August, again reviewed the serious situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and reiterated their grave concern regarding the suffering of the Palestinian people under the prolonged and brutal Israeli military occupation. Likewise, they rejected the ongoing deprivation of Palestinians' inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the return of the Palestinian refugees to their territories, as well as the full enjoyment of their right to a sovereign and independent State.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries appreciates the efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as well as the efforts and initiative of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chair, Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo, aimed at the

implementation of United Nations resolutions regarding the question of Palestine. Unfortunately, despite the strenuous and much-appreciated efforts made by the United Nations to address the tragedy of the Palestinian people, whether through the assistance provided by UNRWA or through the various recommendations and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to reject those resolutions as if it were a State above the law.

It is regrettable that Israel has persisted with policies that are prejudicial to negotiations on the core issues, namely, the status of Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, security and water. That has, in turn, exacerbated conditions on the ground, undermined confidence, deepened mistrust and obstructed the resumption of the peace process. Israel has continued with its illegal campaign aimed at altering the demographic composition, legal status, character and geographic nature of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, so as to facilitate the de facto annexation of more Palestinian land. Israel has also continued to commit other violations, including the imposition of collective punishment, violations of the human rights of the Palestinian civilian population, mass imprisonment of Palestinians and administrative detention, the routine demolition of homes and the resultant displacement of Palestinians, causing constant humiliation, hardship and instability.

The situation is most dire in the Gaza Strip, where approximately 1.7 million Palestinians remain imprisoned by the Israeli blockade imposed by land, air and sea. The latest Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, which was carried out during the eight-day period from 14 to 21 November, reportedly resulted in the killing of more than 160 Palestinians, including women and children, and the wounding of approximately 1,200 other Palestinians. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries strongly considers that military campaign to be a grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian law, in particular, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

While expressing alarm about the intensification of Israel's settlement activities, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries stresses that the full cessation of all Israeli settlement activities is in compliance with international humanitarian law and is necessary for fostering an environment conducive to salvaging the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders. The Movement calls for urgent action and practical measures by the international community, in particular by the Security Council, to compel the occupying Power to completely cease its illegal and destructive settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to abide by all of its obligations under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, United Nations resolutions, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1) and its obligations under the road map in that regard.

The Movement reiterates its serious concern about the dangerous impasse in the Middle East peace process and calls for immediate and practical efforts to be undertaken to advance a fair and credible process based on relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map. We stress that the peace process must ensure an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territory and the other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem; the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination in an independent, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and a just solution for the plight of the Palestinian refugees, based on resolution 194 (III).

In that regard, the Committee on Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has welcomed all efforts and initiatives aimed at achieving the two-State solution and realizing justice for the Palestinian people. It also stresses the importance of the developments to accord observer State status to Palestine, and expresses the hope that that multilateral, peaceful initiative, which is consistent with United Nations resolutions regarding the question of Palestine, including regarding the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and the international consensus on the two-State solution, will contribute positively to salvaging the prospects for peace.

In conclusion, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries reiterates once again its strong support and solidarity with the Palestinian people and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the immediate restoration of their inalienable rights to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Djibouti,
in his capacity as Chair of the thirty-ninth session of the
Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic
Cooperation; message delivered by Kadr Ahmed Hassan,
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Djibouti to the United Nations

[Original: English]

Today, once again, we are gathered here to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is yet another affirmation of the international community's continued support to the Palestinian cause and solidarity with the Palestinian people. On behalf of OIC, I am pleased to express our gratitude to the United Nations and all its organs. In particular, I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, His Excellency Ambassador Abdou Salam Diallo, for their relentless efforts and initiatives in support of the Palestinian cause.

OIC believes that the international community has a special responsibility to help the Palestinian people realize their national rights to self-determination, sovereignty and an independent State in the territory occupied by Israel since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to find a just solution for the plight of the Palestinian refugees in line with resolution 194 (III). In that regard, this afternoon, the international community will have a historic opportunity and responsibility to reaffirm its solidarity with the Palestinian people and support the just cause of the Palestinians for independence. The Palestinians have been negotiating intensely with Israel in good faith over the past two decades to regain their territories and their inalienable rights and to live in peace and security. None of those legitimate goals, unfortunately, have thus far been achieved, and none appears to be within the grasp of the Palestinians in the short term, given Israel's permanent strategy of shifting the goal posts.

It is unfortunate that, on this very International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the prospects for peace and justice in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are challenged by the occupying Power, Israel, through its discriminatory colonial policies and illegal practices. Israel is continuing to illegally build settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. It is constructing the apartheid wall, restricting Palestinians' access to places of worship, escalating acts of violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, denying the free movement of people and goods and confiscating ever more Palestinian homes and land. Such daily violations of

international law by Israel have become daily practices, which are systematically undermining the prospects for a two-State solution.

OIC expresses grave concern at the situation in occupied East Jerusalem, where the Israeli settlement campaign is most intense, and calls for a complete end to all settlement activities, excavations, including near Haram A1-Sharif, home demolitions, residency revocations and closure of Palestinian institutions in the city. The group condemns the terror, violence and provocations by extremist Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and property, including homes, agricultural lands and Muslim and Christian holy sites, and cautions that such actions are fuelling religious sensitivities that risk further destabilization and must be brought to an immediate end by the occupying Power.

Moreover, Israel's escalating military aggression and the illegal blockade it imposes on the Gaza Strip are not only a form of collective punishment against the 1.5 million Palestinians in the Strip, but also a continuation of a war crime against humanity, which must stop. In the same vein, OIC once again calls on the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to assume its responsibility and take the measures necessary for an immediate and permanent cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. Ending the Palestinian people's suffering is long overdue, as is providing them with protection and the necessary means to facilitate the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.

Palestine's accession to full membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in 2011, was an international recognition of the Palestinians' rights. That achievement illustrates concrete and positive support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. Similarly, the positive assessment of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund of the implementation of the Palestinian National Authority's 2009 plan for building the institutions of an independent Palestinian State within a two-year period is yet another strong indication of Palestine's readiness for independent statehood.

In conclusion, we believe that a permanent peace between Israel and Palestine is a *sine qua non* if both peoples are to focus their energies and resources on developing their societies in peace, harmony and coexistence. OIC expresses strong solidarity with the Palestinian people and once again urges all States Members of the United Nations to enable Palestine to become a non-Member observer State by voting this afternoon in favour of the draft resolution on the status of Palestine in the United Nations (A/67/L.28). Granting Palestine improved diplomatic status, however symbolic it may be as a milestone in Palestinian ambitions for statehood, will bring Israelis and Palestinians a step closer to achieving a sustainable solution on the basis of two States living side by side in peace and security.

Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations,
on behalf of the African Union Commission

[Original: English]

On behalf of the African Union Commission, allow me at the outset to salute the presence of the Palestinian delegation, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, and to express the Commission's deepest gratitude to you, Mr. Chair, for steering the work of this important Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the promotion of the just cause of the people of Palestine.

Today marks another day in the history of our collective commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Today, as usual, our statements will project a strong spirit of unity and solidarity with the Palestinian people, but the true test of our unity remains the scrupulous implementation of resolution 242 (1967) as the basis for achieving a just, viable and lasting solution. The date of 29 November is meaningful to the Palestinian people. On this day in 1947, the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), which partitioned the territory known as Mandate Palestine into two States, one Jewish and one Arab.

The African Union believes that the road to a lasting solution is not an event but a process, and has spared no efforts to remain firm and consistent in its position taken at successive African Union summits. Accordingly, at its summit held in July last year, African leaders, among other aspects, reaffirmed their full support for the peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with the principles of international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions to ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian State for the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle, while further reaffirming support for the two-State solution as the only viable option for peaceful coexistence between the State of Palestine and Israel.

The African Union Assembly of Heads of State, in its decision EX.CL/Dec.652(XIX), also called upon States Members of the United Nations, especially the members of the Security Council, to support the Palestinian efforts to obtain full membership in the United Nations based on the 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and urged all Member States that have not yet done so to recognize the State of Palestine as soon as possible.

[Original: French]

The many decisions of the African Union summits clearly show that, from the former Organization of African Unity to today's African Union, Africa's commitment to meeting the national inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, has been and remains a political position that arises out of a natural duty of solidarity and out of African peoples' faithfulness to their own history.

It is well known that the Middle East is the closest region of the world to Africa, that the members of the League of Arab States include nine members of the African Union, and that 26 members of the African Union are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation alongside Arab States. In that respect, the Palestinian issue is still inscribed on the agenda of our continental organization's summits, to which in the past we always invited the President of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and subsequently the President of the Palestinian Authority, to attend. Similarly, resolutions supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people and urgent calls to the international community to become more engaged in the quest for a just and equitable solution have always been endorsed in the discussions of African Heads of State and Government.

We know that many other States and international organizations are also working in the same vein as the African Union and its member States. We also note that the genuine international consensus that has developed and been confirmed over the years regarding the central position of the Palestinian question in the Middle East conflict and regarding the demand for the creation of an independent Palestinian State has yet to bear fruit.

Significant, albeit continually frustrated, efforts have been made by the international community since the start of the Israeli-Palestinian process in 1991. However, the outcome of those efforts remains very mixed, despite the Madrid terms of reference, which led to the Palestinian acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and to mutual recognition between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the State of Israel. Other steps that have also

been taken have unfortunately proved to be imperfect achievements or incomplete stages, from the Oslo Accords to the Annapolis Joint Understanding of November 2007, which for the first time formalized the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by recourse to two separate States. In addition, the international community is regularly a powerless witness to events that contribute to perpetuating and escalating tensions. We are perfectly aware of the complexity of the challenges to be overcome to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to create the conditions for a fair, equitable and lasting peace in the region. At the same time, the current situation is untenable and does not serve the interests of any party. Thus, a healthy jump-start by the international community is timely and needed to create momentum and eliminate the consequences of war in order to promote a decisive change that will firmly put the region on the path towards peace, encompassing all demands in all their dimensions.

[Original: English]

This afternoon, the General Assembly will consider the status of Palestine in the United Nations. On this very specific issue, while lending their support, the African leaders, in their declaration on Palestine adopted at the July summit this year, underscored that membership of the United Nations is a right to be enjoyed by all sovereign States and that membership of the United Nations and in all its programmes and agencies is part of the peace process.

As we speak, human suffering, violence and mistrust, which have long dominated Palestinian-Israeli relations, continue to dominate them. Our overwhelming show of solidarity today must translate into tangible results on the ground, in the region and at the level of the United Nations.

The African Union remains committed to and resolute in its solidarity with the people of Palestine for the achievement of the two-State solution. The pivotal role of the Security Council, the General Assembly and this very committee cannot be overemphasized.

Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States;
message delivered by Ahmed Fathalla, Permanent Observer
of the League of Arab States to the United Nations

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, in my capacity as Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, it gives me pleasure to extend warm greetings to His Excellency the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, its members and all participants. I should also like to express our deep appreciation for the Committee's efforts in support of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Some may ask why this occasion is marked on this particular day. The date of 29 November was chosen as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People because of its significance and implications for the Palestinian people. On that date in 1947, the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), calling for the establishment of two States. However, the Palestinian State has yet to be established. The General Assembly chose this day in order that it may serve as an opportunity for the international community to focus on the fact that the Palestinian question has not yet been resolved owing to the lack of serious political will to implement a just and comprehensive solution. It also recalls that the Palestinian people have not yet realized their inalienable rights, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, namely, the right to self-determination without external

interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty and the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property, from which they have been displaced and expelled.

All such rights are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. However, owing to their inability to realize those rights, the Palestinian people continue to suffer the consequences of a historic injustice amid precarious circumstances and dangerous developments owing to Israel's stubborn refusal to achieve peace.

Although there is international consensus on the two-State solution as the basis for a peaceful settlement, leading to the establishment of an independent, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, Israel continues to defy and to violate United Nations resolutions, international legitimacy and human rights instruments. Israel continues its settlement policy, which seeks to swallow up the land of Palestine, while its Government protects the settlers and covers up their actions, which are completely unjustifiable.

Those actions include attacks against Palestinian civilians, the burning of copies of the Koran and the Bible and attacks against churches, mosques and clerics. In addition, more than 4,000 prisoners and detainees, including women and children, are held in inhuman conditions in Israeli jails, some for more than 25 years. Such conduct demonstrates the racism of Israel and its settlers. It also creates new realities on the ground, undermining and jeopardizing the two-State solution and any real possibility of establishing a sovereign Palestinian State. Israel also persists in its unilateral and illegal actions to Judaize East Jerusalem and its surroundings, altering their demography, rewriting their history and obliterating their Islamic and Christian heritage. Such illegal actions, which Israel is committing with impunity, are in clear violation of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

I should like to underscore the responsibility of the United Nations and all its relevant bodies and agencies to protect the Palestinian people and their property and to help them to fulfil their destiny. The Organization must also do its utmost to support the sacred and legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State.

Israel continues to commit aggressions, including the recent attack on the Gaza Strip and its brutal blockade against the Palestinians in that territory. It continues to adopt dangerous racial practices and decisions that recall the apartheid policy of South Africa. Such actions have had an adverse impact on the lives of more than 1.5 million Palestinians and their descendants since 1948. They are also an attempt to impose and implement a policy of transfer and forced displacement and to deny the right of Palestine refugees to return to their homes.

The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is occupied territory under international law and United Nations resolutions. Israel's unilateral actions in the occupied Arab territories are therefore null and void and have no legal effect pursuant to Security Council resolution 252 (1968). The resolution provides that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including the expropriation of land and properties thereon, that tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot change the status of that city. The international community, particularly the Security Council, the Quartet and its influential members, in particular the United States of America, must shoulder their responsibilities and put an end to the strategy of the Government of Israel of evading and delaying any efforts to achieve peace and to start earnest negotiations to that end.

We would like to reiterate the full support of the Arab States for the Palestinian position, as set out by President Mahmoud Abbas in his speech to the General Assembly on 23 September 2011 (see A/66/PV.19), as well as his speech of 27 September 2012 (see A/67/PV.12), in which he called for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine and expressed his commitment to pursuing negotiations to achieve a lasting resolution to the conflict, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. He also called for the immediate resumption of negotiations based on terms of reference that are in accordance with international legitimacy and for a complete halt to settlement activity. In view of Israel's continued settlement-building policies, it is no longer appropriate or acceptable to continue conducting fruitless negotiations, direct or indirect, that waste time and effort and that do not achieve any progress on the ground. The Government of Israel bears full responsibility for the collapse of the negotiations and the grave consequences that may arise. That is all the more relevant given that it has been more than 10 years since the adoption of the Arab Peace Initiative at the summit of the Council of Arab States held in Beirut in 2002.

Palestine's decision to obtain non-Member observer State status is part of efforts to achieve peace and of the international community's responsibility to help achieve that peace. In recent years, the role of the United Nations in finding a genuine and effective solution has been obscured. The Security Council and the General Assembly must therefore promote international peace and security, which is the fundamental principle for which the Organization was founded, by taking positions and by adopting resolutions in support of the rights of peoples, in particular the Palestinian people. The General Assembly should adopt a resolution upgrading the status of Palestine to a permanent observer State until such time as the Security Council recommends its admission as a full Member of the United Nations, in accordance with international law. We urge it to do that as soon as possible.

I also wish to reiterate that, in the twenty-first century, Israel cannot continue to control the destiny of the Palestinian people. It must heed the trend of history and ongoing developments in the Arab region. The future belongs to peoples, in particular the Palestinian people, who will not accept being dictated to. They have the resolute spirit and the strength of purpose to gain their legitimate rights, however long that may take, and to prevail over the challenges facing them. The best illustration of that changing reality is the fact that the Palestinian people withstood the recent Israeli aggression against Gaza. Dozens of elderly people, women and children perished. The Palestinian people suffered and made great sacrifices. Their infrastructure was destroyed, but their resistance to the brutal aggression was rewarded with a truce, brokered by Egypt on 21 November.

On this important occasion, I would be remiss if I did not warn of the Middle East region's precarious situation owing to the Israeli war machine's brutal onslaught against civilians in the Gaza Strip, including children, women and the elderly. We must therefore focus on ending the occupation, which is the fundamental issue, and on lifting the blockade imposed on the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian people will then be able to live in peace and security in an independent State on their national territory of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Similarly, I must also mention the fact that on 20 November, a delegation of the League of Arab States, comprising the Secretary-General of the League, the ministers for foreign affairs of Arab States and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, visited the besieged Gaza Strip. There it observed the extent of the material damage caused by Israel's indiscriminate bombardment of the Palestinian people. In that connection, I call on the international community to assume its responsibility towards the Palestinian people by providing all forms of assistance and by enabling them to live in peace and security, like other peoples of the world. The United Nations, in particular the Security Council, must fulfil its duty to uphold international peace and security, which is being undermined by Israel's repeated acts of aggression.

**Roger Waters, jury member of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine,
on behalf of civil society organizations active on the question Palestine**

[Original: English]

I thank the members of the Committee very much for receiving me at this moment of solidarity and crisis. I am a musician, not a diplomat, and so I shall not waste this precious opportunity on niceties of protocol. However, I will say that you must all be suffering from listening fatigue, to a certain extent, so while I have also been sitting here listening, I have been editing my rather long speech down to a rather shorter speech, but I believe the full text will be available to anybody who cares to read it at the end of this meeting.

I appear before the Committee as a representative of the fourth Russell Tribunal on Palestine and, in that capacity, I represent global civil society. By way of preamble, I should say that my remarks here today are not personal or driven by prejudice or malice. I am looking only to shed some light on the predicament of a beleaguered people.

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine was created to shed such light and to seek accountability for the violations of international law and the lack of United Nations resolve that prevent the Palestinian people from achieving their inalienable rights, especially the right of self-determination. One particular stimulus to our convening was the disturbing failure of the international community to implement and enforce the clear judgment of the International Court of Justice in 2004, contained in its advisory opinion on the Israeli wall, as requested by the United Nations.

We met here in New York City six weeks ago, on 6 and 7 October, having previously sent out invitations to all interested parties. After listening to exhaustive testimony from many expert witnesses and following careful deliberation, we arrived at the following judgements.

We found that the State of Israel is guilty of a number of international crimes. The first crime is apartheid. The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid defines that crime as inhuman acts by any Government that are committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them. That finding by the Tribunal was endorsed earlier in the year by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva after submissions by the Tribunal, made both orally and in writing.

The second crime is ethnic cleansing. In this case, that crime includes the systematic eviction of much of the native Palestinian population by force since 1947/48.

The third crime is the collective punishment of a civilian population, explicitly prohibited by article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel has violated its obligation as an occupying Power throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Its most serious violations occurred recently in Gaza, with the blockade and virtual imprisonment of the entire population, the indiscriminate killing of Palestinians during the Israeli offensive operation Cast Lead in 2008 and 2009, and now the devastation wrought by the recent attack under the operation Pillar of Defence.

As I speak, I can hear the tut-tutting of governmental and media tongues, trotting out the well-worn mantra of the apologists. "But Hamas started it with their rocket attacks. Israel is only defending itself." Let us examine that argument. Did Hamas start "it"? When did "it" start?

How we understand history is shaped by when we start the clock. If we start the clock at a moment when rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel on a certain afternoon, that is one history. If

we start the clock earlier that morning, when a Palestinian boy of 13 years of age was shot dead by Israeli soldiers as he played soccer on a Gaza field, history starts to look a little different. If we go back further, we see that since Operation Cast Lead, according to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, 271 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli attacks and that, during the same period, not a single Israeli has been killed. A good case can be made that “it” started in 1967, with the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank.

The crisis in Gaza is a crisis rooted in occupation. Israel and its allies would contend that Gaza is no longer occupied. Really? The withdrawal of soldiers and settlers in 2005 changed the nature, not the existence, of occupation. Israel still controls Gaza’s airspace, coastal waters, borders, land, economy and lives. Gaza is still occupied. The people of Gaza, the 1.6 million Palestinians, half of them children under the age of 16, live in an open-air prison. That is the reality that underlies the current crisis. Until we understand that, and until representatives here today, their Governments and the General Assembly take responsibility to end that occupation, we cannot even hope that the current crisis is over.

In October, on the most recent occasion that jurors from the Russell Tribunal addressed the Committee, we were assured that our representations and reports would be presented on the floor of the General Assembly for general debate. If things go well today, we may hope to hold Committee members to that assurance.

I have been diverted briefly; let me return to the Israeli violations that the Russell Tribunal identified.

The fourth crime was in contravention of the prohibition on settlements in the Fourth Geneva Convention, specifically article 49. The settlements — all the settlements — are not simply an obstacle to peace, they are illegal.

The fifth crime was the use of illegal weapons. During Israel’s Operation Cast Lead, four years ago, international human rights organizations documented the use by Tel Aviv of white phosphorus in attacks on Gaza. Human Rights Watch found that “Israel’s repeated firing of white phosphorus shells over densely populated areas of Gaza during its recent military campaign was indiscriminate and is evidence of war crimes”. White phosphorus burns at up to 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. Imagine what happens when it comes into contact with the skin of a child. Human Rights Watch called for Israel’s senior commanders to be held accountable. However, thus far there has been no such accountability.

There are more violations, but members know that. United Nations resolutions trace the history of Israeli violations. Members regret, deplore and even condemn the violations, but when have their resolutions been implemented? It is not enough to deplore and condemn. What we need is for the United Nations — for representatives here, their Governments and the General Assembly in which they serve — to take seriously their responsibility to protect Palestinians living under occupation and facing the daily violation of their inalienable rights to self-determination and equality.

The will of “We the people of these United Nations” is that all our brothers and sisters should be free to live in self-determination, that the oppressed be released from their burden by being given recourse to the law, and that the oppressors be called to account by that same law.

In 1981, I wrote a song called “The Gunner’s Dream”. It appeared on the Pink Floyd album *The Final Cut*. The song purports to express the dying dream of a British Royal Air Force gunner as he plunges to his death from a stricken aircraft towards the corner of some foreign field. He dreams of the future for which he is giving his life.

“A place to stay
 Enough to eat
 Somewhere old heroes shuffle safely down the street
 Where you can speak out loud about your doubts and fears
 And what’s more
 No one ever disappears
 You never hear their standard issue
 Kicking in your door.
 You can relax on both sides of the tracks
 And maniacs don’t blow holes in bandmen by remote control
 And everyone has recourse to the law
 And no one kills the children anymore.”

In 1982 and again in 1983, the General Assembly adopted resolutions, 37/88 and 38/79, holding Israel accountable for its violations. Those resolutions called for a complete arms embargo on Israel. No such embargo has been imposed. Instead, it has fallen to global civil society to take the lead. Following a call in 2005 from Palestinian civil society, social movements, activists and, increasingly, church bodies and even some local government authorities around the world have created the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions. It aims, as many members know, to bring non-violent economic pressure to bear on Israel to force an end to its violations, occupation and apartheid, denial of Palestinians’ right of return and requiring Palestinian citizens of Israel to live as second-class citizens, discriminated against on racial grounds and subject to different laws than their Jewish compatriots. The boycott, divestment and sanctions movement is gaining ground, hand over fist.

Just last week, I was happy to write a letter of support to the student government of the University of California, Irvine, congratulating them on demanding that their university divest from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation. Also, last summer, I was in Pittsburgh to witness the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (United States of America) vote on a resolution to divest from Motorola, Caterpillar and Hewlett-Packard. That would have been unthinkable 10 years ago. To quote the great Bob Dylan, “the times they are a-changin’”.

Let me return to today. The members of the General Assembly are about to have the opportunity to vote on changing Palestine’s status in the United Nations to that of a non-Member State. While not according full United Nations membership, it would provide United Nations recognition to Palestine as a State that would have the right to sign treaties, including, crucially, the Rome Treaty, so that Palestine could become a member of the International Criminal Court.

This is a momentous occasion, and the process leading up to it was started here 13 months ago. It is one of those rare instances where Member States can change the course and the face of history and at the same time reinforce one of the founding principles of the United Nations — the right to self-determination. The bid implicitly refers to the pre-1967 borders and includes the integrity of East Jerusalem, an autonomous Gaza and the refugee diaspora. It is momentous because there are already over 132 Member States that have recognized Palestine as a State and more are appearing every day. Just this week, Hamas has lent its support.

I urge members to consider two points. First, I would call on them to resist pressure from any powerful Government to coerce them into defeating or delaying this issue. Sadly, there is a history of coercion in this hallowed place. No Government, however rich or powerful, should be allowed to use its financial or military muscle to set United Nations policy by bullying other States on this or any other issue.

Secondly, they should not take the statehood vote as the end of fulfilling their obligations. General Assembly responsibility goes far beyond United Nations technicalities. It must include real protection for Palestinians under occupation and real accountability for violations of the law. The General Assembly has powers it does not use. It does not have to defer to or wait for the Security Council.

In just a few months, we will commemorate the tenth anniversary of the killing of Rachel Corrie, the young peace activist killed by an Israeli soldier driving an armoured Caterpillar bulldozer as she tried to protect the house of a pharmacist and his family in Rafah, on Gaza's border. International activists like Rachel Corrie, Tom Hurndall and James Miller took the risks they did, and they and their families paid the ultimate price, because the international community — Member States and the United Nations itself — had failed to protect the vulnerable Palestinian population living under that prolonged occupation.

We are proud, though tears burn our eyes, of the work of these young activists and deeply moved by their sacrifice. But we are angry, too, that our Governments and our international institutions, including the General Assembly, have failed to provide the protection that would make Rachel Corrie's sacrifice unnecessary. Also, let us not forget the thousands of courageous and anonymous Palestinians and their equally courageous Israeli brothers and sisters in arms, a boycott from within, who protest peacefully on a weekly basis for the simple, basic right to an ordinary human life — the right to live in dignity and peace, to raise their families, to till the land, to build a just society, to travel abroad, to be free of occupation, to aspire to each and every human goal, just like the rest of us. Speaking of the rest of us, I live here in New York City. We are a somewhat parochial group, we New Yorkers, to a large extent cut off by propaganda and privilege from the realities of the Palestinians' plight. Few of us understand that the Government of the United States of America, particularly through its power of veto in the Security Council, protects Israel from the condemnation of the global civil society that I have the honour to represent here today. Even as bombs rained down on 1.6 million people in Gaza, the President of the United States of America reasserted his position that Israel has the right to defend itself. We all know the reach and power of Israel's military capability and the deadly effects of its actions. So what did President Obama mean? Did he mean that Israel has the right to indefinitely occupy the whole of the region?

The Palestinians are an ancient, intelligent, cultured, hospitable and generous people. And, of course, they have pride and will resist the occupation of their land and defend their women and children and their property to the best of their ability. Who would not? Would you? Would I? Would President Obama? One would hope so. It would be his duty.

More than a generation ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2625 (XXV), dealing with the principle of equal rights and self-determination. It recognized, in the preamble to the resolution, that when a people face "any forcible action" depriving them of those rights, they have the right to "actions against, and resistance to" such use of force. When the international community does not shoulder its responsibility to protect, Palestinians will shoulder that responsibility themselves.

This is not to suggest that I support the launching of missiles into Israel. I do not. The internationally recognized legal right of resistance means attacking any military target engaged in illegal occupation. But let us be clear, as we believe in the law as indispensable and even-handed. The launching of unguided rockets into Israel, where the most likely targets will be civilians, is not a legal form of resistance. It is wrong, and it is to be condemned.

Many civil society activists, including many Palestinians and Israelis, are committed to non-violent resistance. The boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, which has spread from Palestinian civil society to activists around the world, is part of that non-violent resistance, and I

support it wholeheartedly, but let us be clear that the disparity of power, the reality of the occupation and the response of the occupied is the reality we face unless we find recourse in international law and hold all parties to it.

In the meantime, let me try to dial back the rhetoric a little and address the “Israel has a right to defend itself” claim from a legal and historical perspective. This will not take long.

Ex injuria non oritur jus — a legal right or entitlement cannot arise from injustice. If we truly oppose all violence, whether by the occupier or violent resistance by the occupied, we must aim to end the root causes of violence. In this conflict, that means ending Israel’s occupation, colonization, ethnic cleansing and denial of the right to self-determination and other inalienable rights that the Palestinian people is entitled to, according to the Charter of the United Nations and other tenets of international law. So it should be in the future.

Hamas, having dropped its original demand for Israel to be dismantled in the run-up to the elections, was democratically elected in January 2006, in elections deemed free and fair by every international observer present, including former President of the United States Jimmy Carter. The leaders of Hamas have made their position clear over and over again. It is this: Hamas is open to permanent peace with Israel if there is total withdrawal to the 1967 borders, 22 per cent of historic Palestine, and the arrangement is supported by a referendum of all Palestinians living under occupation. I know everyone here knows this, but where I live they do not know this. They do not know that that is the position of Hamas, so I am telling them.

We are all here for the same reason. We are all committed to human rights, international law, the centrality of the United Nations and equality for all, including for Palestinians. We are all attending this meeting on 29 November that marks the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. But it seems to me that our commemoration of this day is not enough. So what else to do?

The battleground is here, at the Headquarters of the United Nations, and simultaneously in the middle of New York City, with access to the media. The battle is two-pronged. First, we must continue the work of informing the people of the United States of America about the reality of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and, most especially, about the role of their Government, the host country of the United Nations, in using their tax dollars to fund and enable Israel’s violations.

Secondly, and just as important, we must address, finally, serious reform of the United Nations. The United Nations needs to embrace a new democracy. The veto must be rethought or the United Nations might die. The use of the veto as a strategic political tool by one or other of the permanent members of the Security Council has become outmoded. The system is too open to abuse. The blanket protection afforded to Israel by the use of the veto by the United States is but one example of such abuse. I urge the General Assembly to collectively work towards wresting the power back to the people in order to facilitate progress towards a more democratic body, better able to pursue the high aspirations of this great institution, to represent the will of the peoples of the great United Nations.

The General Assembly represents the largest and most democratic component of the United Nations. The United States, China, France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have no veto here. What is needed is political will. The Assembly can make decisions and take actions that the Security Council cannot or will not. The Charter of the United Nations begins with the words “We the peoples of the United Nations”, not “We the Governments”. I urge representatives, on behalf of the people of their countries, on behalf of the people of all countries, in fact on behalf of all the peoples, of this, our shared Earth, to act. They must

seize this historic moment and support the vote today for Palestineian enhanced observer statehood status as a step towards full membership.

**Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations**

[Original: English]

Allow me to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people and our leadership, including its large delegation, headed by President Abbas, to commemorate this year's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in a very historic way.

We are very grateful for this tremendous event this morning and for the very powerful message of solidarity with the Palestinian people. We take that powerful message this morning as a significant signal of the remarkable and historic event that will take place this afternoon with regard to the Palestinian people, through their struggle and steadfastness and by resisting occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. With the help of all Governments, civil society organizations and activists represented here and all those that support the just cause of the Palestinian people, with that collective effort and upholding international law, I believe that this afternoon we will prevail in recognizing the State of Palestine in the United Nations and in bestowing on us non-Member observer State status.

At that historic event, we will legislate the two-State solution in a legal way through the recognition of the two States, thus allowing the negotiation between the two States to take place, while one occupies the land of the other, in violation of international law. With our collective effort, I am sure that we will succeed in putting an end to that occupation and in celebrating the independence of the State of Palestine. The historic event that will take place this afternoon will be remembered by us all, the Palestinian people in the occupied territory and in the diaspora, as part of addressing the injustice that has been inflicted upon us.

However, we know that that in itself is only the beginning of another stage. We promise that our brave people in the occupied territory, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem will be encouraged and that their resolve will be strengthened by the massive support for them here and the additional support of the international community this afternoon. They will continue their legitimate struggle to put an end to the occupation. Our people will not disappear. They will not vanish or leave our land. The only place in which they will stay is our homeland, Palestine. We are fully confident that we will succeed in ending the occupation and in celebrating the independence of our State.

I am sure that many participants will be with us this afternoon. It will be a very memorable and historic moment, in which we will open doors for the Palestinian people to be able to better defend themselves politically, diplomatically and legally, while we wage the struggle in every corner of the occupied territory, in the Gaza Strip, Bil'in, Ni'lin, Silwan, Jerusalem and Nabi Saleh - that is, in every part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Our people are brave and proud. Those here are supporters of such a people. I believe that we will be victorious, not only in what we will do this afternoon, but also, ultimately, in ending the occupation and in celebrating the independence of our State.

This morning has been a wonderful celebration, for which we are grateful. This afternoon, there will be a glorious celebration. We thank members in advance and invite them to be with us. I

want to thank my good friend, whom I have often called a twin brother, the Ambassador of Senegal and Chair of this Committee, and all States members and observers of the Committee, for their wonderful action on behalf of the people of Palestine. When we succeed in accomplishing the objective of ending the occupation and celebrating our independence, we will put up statues to them.

Closing remarks by Abdou Salam Diallo, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

Immediately after the conclusion of this meeting, in this same room, we will be showing some documentaries on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. I invite everyone to stay and see the films as a small token of our solidarity. I also invite everyone to the opening this evening of an exhibit entitled "Palestine: memories, dreams, perseverance". That will take place at 6 p.m. in the north-east gallery of the public lobby of the General Assembly Building. It will be followed by a reception. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Before I adjourn the meeting, I would like to particularly thank Ambassador Pedro Núñez Mosquera, Vice-Chair of our Committee. He will soon end his term in New York and return to a new assignment in his beautiful capital, Havana. Ambassador Núñez is one of the most charming people of the United Nations microcosm. We other members of the Committee greatly appreciate his sense of duty, kindness and hard work. On behalf of all my Bureau colleagues and all members of the Committee, I would like to sincerely thank him for his contribution to our work and for his unwavering interest in United Nations efforts to help settle this long-standing conflict. Ambassador Núñez has worked hard. We wish him success in his future activities and in his personal and family life.

I would also like to thank all those without whom we would not have been here today, in particular, the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Public Information and the Office of Central Support Services, as well as the interpreters and all those working behind the scenes.

III. MESSAGES RECEIVED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

A. Messages from Heads of State or Government

Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan

[Original: Farsi]
[Unofficial translation]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to express, on behalf of the Government and people of Afghanistan, our support for the rights of the Palestinian people, in particular, the right to self-determination and the right to an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Cristina Fernández, President of Argentina

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I have the pleasure to express, on behalf of the Argentine people and on my own behalf, our support for this very important day of commemoration and to reiterate our conviction of the need to pursue talks in order to achieve a peaceful, just, definitive and comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict that provides for an independent and viable Palestinian State.

In my recent address during the general debate of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, on behalf of the Argentine people, I called for a response to a situation that has dragged on for decades and that, owing to the changing circumstances, the global powers have not yet been able to resolve.

The path towards a solution for Palestine, the Gordian knot for peace in the Middle East, includes the granting of observer State status to Palestine by the General Assembly. Today, that historic event will take place and Argentina will co-sponsor the resolution. We also call for Palestine to be recognized as a full Member of the United Nations, which will undoubtedly help to achieve a solution that will benefit the peoples of the Middle East, thus defeating the merchants of violence forever.

King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain

[Original: Arabic]

I have the honour to convey to you and your distinguished Committee our deep gratitude and appreciation for your unrelenting efforts to support the Palestinian cause at the United Nations and in international forums.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is an important occasion that reminds us of the continued responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the matter of the Palestinian people and to finding a peaceful, just and comprehensive solution to all aspects of that problem, on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy. This is also an occasion on which both to renew the commitment of the international community to its special responsibility towards the Palestinian people and end the injustice it has suffered since 1948, and to embody the commitment of the international family to continue to support the Palestinian people and its just and long-standing struggle to acquire its legitimate and inalienable rights, end the tyrannical Israeli occupation of its territories, achieve independence, exercise its legitimate right to self-determination and return, and establish an independent State on its national territory with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Since the question of Palestine was first submitted to the international organizations, the Security Council, the General Assembly and their various subsidiary mechanisms have adopted hundreds of important resolutions on the matter that have urged the need to find a just solution. However, the Israeli authorities have paid no heed to or implemented any of them. They have, on the contrary, treated them with contempt, which shows the extent of their arrogance, disdain for international legitimacy and defiance of the will of the international community.

For more than 30 years, the question of Palestine has been one of the most significant challenges that have threatened security and stability in the Middle East and the world, and the developments that continue to take place in the Palestinian territories, the practices that Israel continues to pursue and the Israeli military onslaughts on the Palestinian territories bear witness to the extent and gravity of the violations to which the Palestinian people are subjected. Those violations include, in particular, the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes, the seizure of their land and property, and the continuation of illegal settlement activity. That activity has undergone an unprecedented acceleration in recent years, with more and more settlements being built in the West Bank and Al-Quds al-Sharif, which proves that the Israeli authorities are determined to continue to pursue their policy of destroying the peace process that is sought by the international community.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is deeply concerned about those Israeli policies and dangerous practices, which are the main cause of the stagnation of international efforts to resume the peace process and have led to increased tension and instability in the Middle East. They have also exacerbated the humanitarian, economic and social situation of the Palestinian people.

On this day, the Kingdom of Bahrain renews its support for the just issue of the Palestinian people and demands the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy that call for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State and support international efforts to have Palestine accepted as a State Member of the United Nations as soon as possible. It applauds the decision of UNESCO to accept the State of Palestine as a member, a courageous step that affirms the right of that State to obtain international legitimacy within the 4 June 1967 borders and for Al-Quds al-Sharif to be the capital of the independent Palestinian State, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002); the terms of reference of the Madrid peace conference; the road map; the Arab Peace Initiative; and the vision that is based on a two-State solution that has been provided for in United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 1515 (2003) and the relevant resolutions that called for a peaceful and durable solution to be found to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls upon the international community to redouble international efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people and to stand with it in the suffering it has endured for so long. We commend the great efforts that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has exerted and affirm the need for it to be provided with all the facilities that it needs to carry out in full the mandate it has been given by the relevant General Assembly resolutions and gather the international support that is needed for the Palestinian people to obtain their established rights and to reach a peaceful and just resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus

[Original: English]

On behalf of the Belarusian people and personally, the President of the Republic of Belarus congratulates the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil

[Original: English]

The Government of Brazil reaffirms, on this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, its firm, permanent support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people and the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

Brazil reiterates its commitment to the creation of an independent and democratic Palestinian State. Such a State shall be contiguous and economically viable. Its borders shall be those of June 1967, in conformity with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council and other relevant United Nations resolutions. Its capital shall be East Jerusalem.

In my statement at the opening of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, I affirmed that only a free and sovereign Palestine can fulfil Israel's legitimate aspirations for peace with its neighbours, security in its borders, and regional political stability. For this to happen, the implementation of the two-State solution is urgent.

Likewise, I reiterate Brazil's support for the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations, a measure long overdue by the international community. In light of the current obstacles to the immediate realization of this goal, we will equally support, as an interim measure, the upgrading of Palestine's current "status" to that of an observer State. The international recognition of the State of Palestine and its admission to the United Nations as a full Member can help reduce the asymmetry that now characterizes relations between Palestine and Israel, and thus contribute to promoting effective peace negotiations. It was in that spirit that we resolutely supported the admission of Palestine as a full member of UNESCO.

In the face of the dangerous paralysis in the peace process, effective negotiations that are able to produce concrete results must be urgently resumed. The role of the United Nations, and that of the Security Council above all, is fundamental. The Council cannot and should not refrain from exercising its responsibilities. The promotion of peace in the Middle East is in the interest of all the States Members of the United Nations and cannot be delegated. The Quartet has become inoperative and does not even report on its activities to the international community through the Security Council.

Brazil joins the international community in denouncing the continuation of the Israeli settlements policy in Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Such practice is illegal under international law and constitutes an important obstacle to peace and to the realization of the two-State solution.

On the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and the People of Brazil extend their support to the Palestinians all over the world, especially those in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, who suffer the injustices and humiliations of the occupation, the blockade and the daily suppression of their basic rights. This year, the World Social Forum Free Palestine will take place in Brazil from 28 November to 1 December, in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul.

At the same time, we firmly reject radicalization and violence against the Israeli civilian population and deplore such acts as the launching of rockets. We call upon all Palestinian actors to fully commit to non-violence and dialogue as fundamental principles in their struggle to end occupation and promote their self-determination.

Brazil firmly supports the initiatives of the Palestinian Government aimed at consolidating their State and congratulates President Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad for their efforts in this regard. The reconciliation among all sectors of Palestinian political forces is of fundamental importance for achieving those objectives.

Together with its bilateral and multilateral partners, Brazil has been implementing cooperation projects, with a view to promoting the well-being of the Palestinian people in areas such as health, sport and agriculture. Since 2007, we have also hosted Palestinian refugees, to whom access to government programmes in areas such as health, education and housing is fully granted.

The serious financial restrictions currently facing the Palestinian Authority constitute a threat to the Palestinian national project. We hope the international community will answer, as did the Government of Brazil, the appeals for donations made by UNRWA.

In spite of the enormous challenges ahead, Brazil remains confident that the Palestinian cause will succeed and that Palestinians will be able to enjoy their rights to sovereignty, peace and shared prosperity.

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah of Brunei Darussalam

[Original: English]

The Government and people of Brunei Darussalam join me on this special day in expressing our deepest respect for the Palestinian people and our firm support for their legitimate struggle for peace, security and justice and their inalienable right to self-determination in their own independent and sovereign State.

We support the Palestinian people in their pursuit of legitimate goals and their quest for development based on dignity and self-reliance.

We also support a negotiated solution resulting in a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed by the Quartet road map and relevant Security Council resolutions.

We are of the view that the continued engagement of the international community remains imperative to the resolution of conflict. We also hope that all parties resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue and negotiation.

We therefore wish to see an end to Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, an early and significant easing of restrictions on the free movement of persons and goods within Palestine and the resumption of negotiations by the Quartet.

We are deeply concerned about the recent deteriorating situation in the Middle East region. Brunei Darussalam expresses its heartfelt sympathy to all Palestinians and its condemnation of the recurrent aggressive acts of violence against innocent civilians.

Brunei Darussalam would like to express its appreciation to UNRWA for their tireless work in assisting the vulnerable Palestinian people. Their work towards this cause is indispensable and very much valued by the international community.

Our appreciation also goes to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its valuable and continued efforts to bring about a peaceful solution and ensuring that the international community remains focused on the plight of the Palestinian people.

Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso

[Original: French]

The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People provides Burkina Faso with further opportunity to pay tribute to the just struggle of the Palestinian people to assert all of their rights and achieve the recognition of Palestine.

The status of observer State in the United Nations to which Palestine aspires will certainly breathe new life into the peace process and step up progress towards the two-State solution, with separate States living side by side within internationally recognized borders.

Committed to dialogue as the best way to settle disputes, my country condemns violence in all its forms, denounces impediments of all kinds, and urges respect for fundamental rights and improved security, socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions for Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The people of Burkina Faso fervently hope that the negotiations under way will lay a solid groundwork for a definitive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Firm in the belief that the assistance and support of the international community are necessary as the quest for appropriate solutions to the Middle East conflict goes forward, I urge the continuation of peace negotiations on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

As it welcomes the initiatives of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Burkina Faso reaffirms its solidarity with the struggle for dignity being waged by thousands of Palestinian women and men.

Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of China

[Original: Chinese]

[Unofficial translation]

On behalf of the Government of China, I wish to extend warm congratulations to the special commemorative meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Palestinian issue is at the core of the Middle East issue. The Government of China firmly supports the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their lawful rights, supports the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty, with East Jerusalem

as its capital, on the basis of the 1967 borders, and supports Palestine in joining the United Nations and other international organizations.

China closely follows the situation in Gaza and condemns any action that causes casualties among innocent civilians. The recent conflict in Gaza has once again highlighted the importance and urgency of resolving the Palestinian issue. We hope that Palestine and Israel will, in keeping with the overall interest of peace, make parallel efforts to rebuild mutual confidence and create conditions for early resumption and substantive progress of the peace talks. The international community should intensify efforts to encourage dialogue and facilitate peace, keep up vigorous support for Palestine's capacity building and continue to improve the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people.

An early, comprehensible and just solution to the Palestinian issue is what people in the region and the world want to see. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China is committed to promoting the Middle East peace process and supports the United Nations in playing a bigger role in the Middle East issue. China is ready to work with the international community and play a constructive role in helping bring about a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian issue and advancing peace, stability and development in the Middle East.

**Kim Yong Nam, President of the Presidium of the Supreme
People's Assembly of the Democratic People's
Republic of Korea**

[Original: Korean]
[Unofficial translation]

I extend warm militant greetings to you and the friendly Palestinian people on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The continuous building of settlements and acts of racist oppression against the Palestinians committed by Israel are the main obstacles standing in the way of achieving fair and permanent peace in the Middle East.

I reaffirm our invariable support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just cause to regain their legitimate national rights, including the founding of an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital. And I wish you greater successes in your responsible work.

Rafael Correa Delgado, President of Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government of Ecuador reiterates its full endorsement of the spirit and nature of the General Assembly resolutions establishing this observance, renews its unconditional support for the Palestinian cause and expresses the hope that Palestine will soon become a full Member of the Organization.

The date of 29 November, chosen by the United Nations for this Day of Solidarity, serves to remind the conscience of the international community of the injustices and abuses suffered by the

Palestinian people throughout its history. This day must always be a time for reflection on justice, equity, respect for human rights and the fundamental principles of peaceful coexistence among nations.

And so, on this day, Ecuador calls once again on the international community, in accordance with international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the many resolutions of different United Nations bodies, to fully recognize, without exception, the rights of Palestine, including self-determination and full participation within the Organization.

Mohamed Morsy, President of Egypt

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I am writing to renew the full support of Egypt for the fraternal Palestinian people and its legitimate endeavour to exercise all its inalienable rights, foremost among which is the basic right to establish an independent, sovereign State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital, on the basis of the terms of reference of international legitimacy, which include General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the principles of international law, international humanitarian law, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

I am greatly distressed that, this year, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being observed while, at the same time, Israel is carrying out an iniquitous attack against Gaza. That affirms the need to take action to halt Israel's unprecedented violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and ensure that there are no repetitions of Israel's tyrannical onslaughts against the Palestinian people. Israeli officials must be held accountable before international justice for the war crimes that were committed during Israel's aggression against Gaza in 2008/09 and for the most recent attack.

Unquestionably, this iniquitous attack affirms the need to strive for the establishment this year of the State of Palestine, given the clear international consensus on the need for it to be established and internationally recognized and gain United Nations membership, as has been reaffirmed by the League of Arab States on many occasions and by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in all its documents, the most recent of which was the Declaration on Palestine that was issued at the Tehran summit.

Egypt, in coordination with the Arab Group and the States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, is exerting intensive efforts to increase the number of States that recognize the State of Palestine from the current number of 130. We hope that your esteemed Committee will continue its rigorous endeavours, in which Egypt and the Arab States are currently involved, to mobilize the necessary support and votes in favour of the General Assembly draft resolution to grant Palestine the status of non-Member observer State that would be put to the vote on this day of 29 November 2012. We also hope that the Committee will persist in its efforts to urge the Security Council to accept Palestine's request for full membership of the United Nations.

Here, I should like to underline that efforts should be made to return to negotiations on the proper bases. The Quartet failed to ensure that peace negotiations were resumed, because there were no specific terms of reference for the negotiations. I stress that the settlement policy must be halted and a specific timetable determined, as well as a clear mechanism for following up any future

negotiations, in order to ensure genuine implementation by all the parties of the obligations that are agreed upon.

In conclusion, I must commend the efforts that the Committee has exerted over the past year and the many international meetings and seminars that it has arranged with a view to raising awareness of Palestinian rights. I must also condemn Israeli practices and insist on greater support for the just issue of Palestine.

With all my very best wishes to yourself and the members of the esteemed Committee.

Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I reiterate India's unwavering support for the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet road map and relevant Security Council resolutions.

We support the aspirations of Palestine for enhanced status at the United Nations. We played an active role in supporting the efforts of the State of Palestine to secure full membership status at UNESCO. We remain committed to Palestine's bid for full and equal membership of the United Nations.

India will continue to support the development and nation-building efforts of Palestine. During the visit of President Mahmoud Abbas to India in September this year, we pledged an amount of \$10 million as budgetary support for Palestine and signed three memorandums of understanding for development projects in the fields of information and communications technology, vocational training and construction of schools in Palestine. India also contributes \$1 million annually to UNRWA. We are also implementing developmental projects in Palestine jointly with Brazil and South Africa within the India-Brazil-South Africa framework.

We remain hopeful that talks and negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis will resume soon, leading to a comprehensive peace process and a final resolution of the conflict.

On this important occasion, on behalf of the people of India, I convey our best wishes and greetings to the friendly people of Palestine

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia

[Original: Indonesian]
[Unofficial translation]

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, allow me, in this year's commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to once again convey a message of solidarity from the people and Government of the Republic of Indonesia to the Palestinian people.

As Palestinians everywhere hope and pray for peace in their land; as they work in search of their inalienable rights; and as they look forward to the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital, the people of Indonesia will stand alongside them until the day their dreams become reality.

Last year, President Mahmoud Abbas went before the United Nations to convey the desire of Palestine to be recognized as a Member of the United Nations.

Strong encouragement and support of most States Members of the United Nations, including the Republic of Indonesia, filled the General Assembly Hall as President Abbas took to the rostrum to request this long overdue and legitimate right.

Since then, more and more nations have continued to support the Palestinian people's wish to sit among other sovereign States in the United Nations, as well as to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine as soon as it is established.

This year, President Abbas has announced Palestine's intention, for the time being, of seeking non-Member observer State status.

Indonesia will stand firm with the Palestinian people in this quest.

We look forward to the day when Palestine and Israel will exist side by side in peace, and to no longer bear witness to fear, hatred and violence. We therefore remain to stand by the two-State solution.

The future can only be temporarily designed by the limited desires of the few; in the end, it is always defined by the needs of everyone.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

[Original: Farsi]
[Unofficial translation]

For more than 60 years, the question of Palestine has been the main issue for the free nations of the world. The cruel occupation of Palestine and the displacement of its nation are considered not only as the deprivation of the Palestinian people's fundamental and legitimate right, but also a violation of everlasting human values and ignoring the wisdom, logic and common sense of all humanity.

The crisis in the region, which has lasted for several decades, is the unpleasant consequence of the occupation of Palestine. The expansionist, militaristic and inhuman policies of the occupying and fabricated Zionist regime has resulted in continued instability and violence in the region. Imposing five wars on nations of the region, the killing and imprisonment of tens of thousands of people, displacement of millions of others and the recent aggression on Gaza are but clear indications of the true nature of the uncivilized Zionists and the mission they carry.

The failure of the international community in addressing the question of Palestine is the product of the discriminatory and unilateral policies of some members of the Security Council which

have resulted in the continuation of the crisis and posed a tremendous threat to international peace and security.

The great Iranian nation, while declaring its full solidarity with the suffering and oppressed people of Palestine, reiterates its continued moral support for them. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that without paying attention to the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people, including the exercise of their right of self-determination and the elimination of all acts of aggression and occupation against them, as well as the restoration of justice and dignity to them, it would be impossible to find a just solution for the crisis.

It is obvious that the best solution for the question of Palestine would be holding a free and fair election with the participation of all Palestinians, including Muslims, Christians and Jews. In this regard, the essential, effective and legal role of the international community, in particular the United Nations, in resolving the issue of Palestine and ending the conflict is inevitable.

Undoubtedly, the era of Zionism and occupation is over. The future belongs to the great nation of Palestine, to the other free nations and to justice, kindness and freedom.

King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein of Jordan

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we have the honour to convey to you and all members of your distinguished Committee our sincere thanks and appreciation for your sustained efforts in defence of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the basic and legitimate right to self-determination, and to realize its aspiration to establish an independent, sovereign, viable State on its national Palestinian territory.

For many years the genuine efforts of the Committee have enabled it to play a vital and effective role in gathering international support for the Palestinian people and its just cause and have thrown light on the extent of its terrible suffering, the difficult circumstances with which it has to contend and the appalling injustice to which it has been subjected, which offends all humanitarian norms and moral values, as a result of the continuing Israeli occupation and its practices.

The Palestinian people continue to suffer as a result of harsh economic and social circumstances, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and those circumstances have led to a huge increase in levels of poverty, hunger and deprivation of dignity and the most basic rights of mankind, and indicate the size of the historic injustice that befell that people. Those circumstances also require unambiguous international action to end the suffering that the Palestinian people endures.

The most recent Israeli onslaught on the Gaza Strip constitutes a dangerous threat to security and stability in the region of the Middle East and the future of its peoples. That underlines the pressing need to support all the regional and international efforts to maintain the ceasefire agreement that was reached and assist the Palestinian people in overcoming the grievous impact of the attack. Efforts must also be intensified to restore impetus to endeavours to revive the peace negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli parties, with the aim of establishing an independent, viable Palestinian State within the 1967 borders and with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital, which will realize the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to be free and independent.

The two-State solution, which enjoys international consensus, is the basis for ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is also the way in which comprehensive peace will be achieved in the Middle East, and the international community must shoulder its responsibility to urge all the parties to seize the two-State solution, return to the negotiation process and consider the various final status issues before this valuable opportunity is lost.

Over the years, we have done all we could to forward the peace process and reach basic, practical and realistic solutions to this conflict. We recently hosted exploratory discussions in Jordan and have cooperated with all the parties concerned in making the proper conditions available to the Palestinians and Israelis for direct and serious negotiations in which they could discuss the final status issues, namely, borders, Jerusalem, the refugees, security and water. However, Israel persists in its intransigence, procrastination and unilateral measures, foremost among which is the continued settlement policy, which aims to change the nature of Jerusalem and threatens its holy places, and that constitutes a major obstacle to the success of all efforts and has led to the stagnation of negotiations and the stalling of the peace process.

Jordan, which will continue its efforts, in cooperation with the regional and international parties concerned, to assist both parties to return to the negotiating table and resume the peace process, will, at the same time, maintain its efforts to protect Islamic and Christian holy places and support the people of Palestine and Jerusalem, whose holy city is being subjected by every possible means to all sorts of dangerous and tyrannical measures. In cooperation with the Palestinian National Authority, Jordan will continue to urge the international community to shoulder its responsibility to halt all these gross violations, which, if continued, could destroy peace efforts.

Jordan and the Arab and Muslim world are committed to finding a comprehensive peace that will restore peoples' rights and contribute to their security, stability and well-being and bring them better living conditions and a brighter future. We believe that the present opportunity may not be repeated: the two-State solution, based on the agreed terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative, constitutes a real and unprecedented opportunity to reach a comprehensive settlement. Israel must take that historic opportunity before it is too late. It is an opportunity that requires courage, will, determination and resolution, and effective and genuine involvement in the peace process.

We commend the efforts of your venerable Committee, which has at the forefront of its priorities the need for sustained work towards a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and value your unrelenting efforts to call for the restoration of legitimate rights and for Palestine to be accepted as a non-Member observer State of the United Nations.

We congratulate you on your noble endeavours, and hope that you will continue to garner international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We also hope that it will gain its legitimate rights and realize its national aspirations and that its just cause will be victorious, and support peace efforts in the Middle East.

In conclusion, we wish you every success in reaching your noble goals, which we all support.

Choummaly Savasone, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

[Original: English]

As the world community commemorates the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Lao People's Democratic Republic takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the oppressed people of Palestine and reiterates its consistent and firm support for the just and legitimate struggle to recover their inalienable rights, above all, the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign State on Palestinian soil.

Today's commemoration underlines the importance and urgency of finding a solution to the question of Palestine and of addressing the plight of the Palestinian people, who live through tremendous suffering and humiliation. It is with grave concern that we witness the volatile situation on the ground throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

In this regard, we join the international community to call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately cease all its unlawful colonization in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, place a complete and indefinite freeze on all settlement activities, and respond favourably and in good faith to the international consensus in this respect, so as to pave the way for an environment conducive to the pursuit of peace and for salvaging the prospects of achieving a two-State solution, as enshrined in the Security Council resolutions and other relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reaffirms its long-standing solidarity with and unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for dignity, justice and their inalienable right to self-determination in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace with the State of Israel, with secure and internationally recognized borders.

Finally, the Lao People's Democratic Republic would like to take this opportunity to wish the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People every success in its noble endeavour.

Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia

[Original: English]

On behalf of the Government and the people of Malaysia, I wish to express my sincere greetings to His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of Palestine, as well as to the people of Palestine, on this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

29 November 1947 was when the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), which called for the establishment in Palestine of a "Jewish State" and an "Arab State". Of the two States to be created under this resolution, only Israel has so far come into existence.

In the 65 years since the adoption of that historic resolution, the international community is still struggling to find a just and peaceful solution to the issue of Palestine.

Despite condemnation by the international community, Israel continues its expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and keeps demolishing Palestinian homes and uprooting Palestinian families. Over the years, Israel has stifled the fledgling Palestinian economy, eroded the social fabric of Palestinian society and denied Palestinians their fundamental rights, in violation of international law.

The Palestinian people have a right to equal status and representation. In this regard, Malaysia fully supports the application of Palestine for non-Member status in the United Nations.

Malaysia commends the Palestinian people's strength and courage in spite of the daily hardships that they face. The plight of the Palestinian people has always been close to Malaysian hearts. Malaysia will not waiver in its support for the Palestinians and their aspirations for self-determination and independence, with a sovereign State based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mohamed Waheed, President of Maldives

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I, on behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Maldives, reaffirm the steadfast solidarity of Maldives with the Palestinian people and our consistent support towards the establishment of an independent State of Palestine.

Ever since the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, the Government of Maldives, as well as its people, have greatly invested, both politically as well as emotionally, in the fight for an independent State of Palestine. The most important issue concerning peace in the Middle East is the recognition of Palestine as a State. We do not believe that there can be a meaningful dialogue without the acceptance of statehood.

Maldives strongly condemns the recent attack targeting the innocent civilians of Gaza by Israel. We are deeply saddened by the fact that dozens of our brothers and sisters have been killed and wounded. Maldives considers it as a grave violation of the human rights of the Palestinian citizens. While the Government of Maldives welcomes the agreement for a ceasefire in Gaza, we reiterate our call upon the international community to step up its efforts in reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the problems of the Middle East, restoring peace in the region and allowing the people of Palestine and Israel to enjoy peace, stability and prosperity in their own sovereign State.

Maldives believes that it is only through negotiations that a lasting peace can be found to the conflict between Palestine and Israel. We repeatedly condemn Israel for violating United Nations resolutions that call for the protection of the rights of the Palestinian people, which itself is posing a serious threat to international peace and security.

We believe that it is in the interest of the entire international community that a lasting solution is found at the earliest, resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine living within a secure and recognized border, with East Jerusalem at its capital, living side by side and at peace with the State of Israel.

Maldives once again reiterates its call in supporting the Palestinian bid for full membership of the United Nations, and we firmly believe that although not an end in itself, this would be a good beginning for the full realization of the Palestinian people's rights.

King Mohammed VI of Morocco

[Original: Arabic]

As the world commemorates the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which was mandated by the General Assembly in 1977, I should like to reiterate the full and enduring support of the Kingdom of Morocco for the legitimate, inalienable and historic rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the right to establish on its national territory an independent State, Palestine, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital, and to live side by side with Israel in peace and security, in accordance with the United Nations and international terms of reference.

On this occasion, I wish to express deep appreciation to all members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their tireless efforts to resolve the issue that is central to global peace and security.

This year, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being commemorated at a critical juncture, in view of the changes that are taking place in the whole Middle East, and which make it imperative for us to defend the Palestinian question against any interference or special designs.

Unfortunately, however, the persistence of the Government of Israel in continuing to systematically violate the resolutions of international legitimacy, occupy Arab territory, pursue its settlement and Judaization policy and confiscate land and property makes it impossible for the international efforts that aim to end the occupation and bring about a just, comprehensive and durable peace to succeed. Israel also continues to blatantly violate international legitimacy, continuing to excavate under and around the Al-Aqsa mosque and to change the religious, cultural and human features of the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif.

In my capacity as Chair of the Al-Quds Committee, I must draw the attention of the international community to the dangers posed by Israel's continued pursuit of its plans to change the legal, demographic and political status of the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif, and strongly urge the influential international Powers to take action to apply the requirements of international legitimacy, in order to ensure that the city remains, as it has always been, a symbol of coexistence and peace between the monotheistic religions.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its deep concern over and strong condemnation of the aerial attacks to which the Gaza Strip is subjected, which have caused the deaths of many innocent persons. Morocco also cautions against the negative impact on the security and stability of the region of any escalation, and requests the international community to shoulder its responsibility to ensure that the fragile, recently agreed ceasefire is maintained and that all disturbing developments that could increase the lack of confidence between the parties to the peace process are suppressed.

Against the same background, we should like to voice yet again the imperative need for Palestinian reconciliation to succeed, thereby strengthening the Palestinians' negotiating position in the peace process, and to affirm that a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East can

only be achieved through the establishment of an independent, viable Palestinian State, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

On the basis of our belief that peace and security in the Middle East can only be realized when aggressive practices against the helpless Palestinian people are abandoned, and that the adoption of the logic of force and imposition of the fait accompli and crippling conditions do not contribute to efforts to bring peace and security, we call upon the Quartet to oblige Israel to return forthwith to the negotiating table and honour its commitments under United Nations resolutions and the agreements concluded by the relevant parties, and to take real action towards finding a just and durable resolution of the conflict, based on the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security as the realistic approach to ending this conflict, which has endured for so long.

The United Nations is called upon today to shoulder its responsibility to accept Palestine as a non-Member State, and we take this opportunity to express once more our full support for the Palestinian National Authority, under the leadership of His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas, for this commendable step.

The Kingdom of Morocco, while it encourages support for the steps taken by the Palestinian National Authority with a view to acquiring non-Member status, underlines that negotiations are the best way to recover the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and establish an independent Palestinian State.

In conclusion, we commend you for your sustained efforts to find a just resolution for the fraternal Palestinian people and trust that God will reward your noble endeavours to regain that people's legitimate rights.

Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of Namibia

[Original: English]

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia, I would like to express our appreciation to Your Excellency and, through you, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for organizing the special commemorative Day of Solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine.

This solemn occasion is a fitting moment to highlight the plight of the people of Palestine, who have greatly endured hardship under the Israeli occupation. We in Namibia have followed with great concern the confiscation of land and the destruction of homes and means of livelihood to make room for new Israeli settlements on Palestinian land. We view this action as counterproductive to the peace process in which the people of Palestine could be guaranteed the opportunity to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination.

As long as the people of Palestine are denied their right to self-determination, Namibia will continue to extend its unwavering support and solidarity with them.

We fully support the aspiration of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Therefore, Namibia looks forward to the day when Palestine finally joins the family of independent and sovereign nations.

I would like to encourage the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to redouble its efforts by keeping the plight of the people of Palestine high on the agenda of the international community. Namibia, as a member of the Committee, will continue to play an active role until the ultimate objective of the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine is attained.

Asif Ali Zardari, President of Pakistan

[Original: English]

By developing its State institutions over the last couple of years, the Palestinians have once again shown that they are an integral part of the international community, something that has been acknowledged by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Its membership of UNESCO in October 2011 was a proof of the legitimacy of its cause, as well as the broad international support that it enjoyed.

Pakistan has been an ardent supporter of the attainment of the inalienable right to self-determination for the people of Palestine for over six decades. On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and people of Pakistan reiterate that our ultimate objective remains the creation of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. We will also continue supporting Palestinian statehood and the quest for enhanced status at the United Nations in the interim.

Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]
[Unofficial translation]

I congratulate you on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

On 29 November 1947, the General Assembly adopted its historic resolution 181 (II) on the question of Palestine. Since then, the creation of its own State has become the paramount objective for your people. Mindful of the years of selfless work by several generations of Palestinians and their aspiration for sovereignty, I am sure that this objective is attainable.

Russia strongly believes that a fair solution to the Palestinian issue is the main prerequisite for comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Amid the ongoing profound transformations in the region, this task is becoming particularly critical.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the Middle East Quartet, Russia intends to sustain its proactive support for the efforts aimed at the achievement of a final settlement to the Middle East conflict.

We have always supported the friendly people of Palestine. You may rely on our practical help in forming the grounds of Palestinian statehood and resolving other pressing problems in future.

I wish you, Mr. Abbas, success in your work and a peaceful future and prosperity in their native land to all people of Palestine.

Macky Sall, President of Senegal

[Original: French]

As the recently elected President of Senegal, I am pleased to be joining you for the first time in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

In my statement before the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly last September, I reiterated the unswerving support of Senegal and of our Committee for the establishment of a viable and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace with the State of Israel, each within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Achieving this vision means affirming the rule of law over force. It means keeping the promise of the partition plan decided upon under the authority of the United Nations and with its guarantee. Finally, and above all, it means offering to all the peoples of that afflicted region, including the Israelis, the opportunity for peaceful coexistence free from fear and violence.

While I welcome the ceasefire agreement concluded on 21 November, I deplore the recent Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, as well as the continued illegal practices ongoing in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including confiscation of land, construction of 797 new housing units in the settlements, and activities designed to undermine the contiguity of Palestinian territory and affect the demographic character and multiconfessional heritage of Jerusalem, which is the holy city for the three revealed religions.

I solemnly appeal to the occupying Power to comply with international humanitarian law in the occupied territories and put a halt to its embargo and “facts-on-the-ground” policies in order to create conditions conducive to the resumption of the negotiation process, now at a near standstill.

I urge the Quartet to assume its responsibilities in this area promptly.

Palestine's rightful place is within the community of free and independent nations.

It is for this reason that I call upon all Member States to support the request made by President Mahmoud Abbas to confer observer status upon the State of Palestine pending its full membership in the United Nations.

May we continue to rally around this ultimate goal, which is in fact the purpose of this Day of Solidarity that brings us together.

Along with my heartfelt congratulations, allow me also to convey to the dauntless Palestinian people and its leaders the renewed expression of our encouragement and support.

Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka

[Original: English]

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People serves to remind the international community that the Palestinians are still denied their right to self-determination, independence and sovereignty, and dispossessed of much of their land. The people of Sri Lanka have

steadfastly stood with the Palestinian people in their decades-long struggle for justice and the fulfilment of their inalienable rights, and will continue to do so.

Every possibility for peace, with a view to ultimately establishing an independent State of Palestine, existing peacefully, side by side with Israel, must be actively pursued. Thus, the peace process needs to overcome its current impasse. Resolving this issue will also bring about peace in the entire Middle East. The political unity and economic advancement of the Palestinian people will contribute to the viability of the two-State solution, which Sri Lanka resolutely supports, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. We are pleased that the Palestinian Authority, despite severe political and economic constraints, has made progress in institution-building.

Sri Lanka supports Palestine's application for admission as a full Member in the United Nations.

Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Royal Thai Government wishes to once again join the international community in reaffirming our solidarity with and support for the Palestinian people in their continued struggle for their basic freedoms and rights, especially their inalienable right to self-determination.

This year is a special occasion for Thailand and Palestine, since our two countries have officially established diplomatic relations since 1 August 2012. This is recognition of Palestine's rights in accordance with Thailand's long-standing position, and a significant step towards further enhancing our bilateral cooperation, especially in the field of technical cooperation, which is essential for building a future independent and viable Palestinian State.

Thailand also hosted the United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace in July this year. This meeting provided an excellent opportunity to listen to the perspectives of Asian and Pacific countries on how to contribute towards the shared vision of such a peace.

Looking ahead, Thailand wishes to emphasize that it is important for all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint and resume negotiations in order to achieve a just, comprehensive, enduring and peaceful solution to the situation in the Middle East, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. Attaining this goal should be supported by all members of the international community.

In commemorating this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Thai people send their best wishes to the Palestinian people for their future prosperity, good health and peace.

Abdullah Gül, President of Turkey

[Original: Turkish]
[Unofficial translation]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to reaffirm our support for the justified cause and legitimate demands of the brotherly people of Palestine on behalf of the Turkish people and myself.

We follow with appreciation the efforts exerted by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which has enabled the Palestinian people to reach out in the international arena.

Developments in the Middle East and North Africa have further increased the significance of finding a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this framework, recognition of Palestine at the international level and ensuring national unity within Palestine constitute the main priorities. It is not possible to explain with any moral, political and legal justification the deprivation of the Palestinian people of their right to a State, from which Israel has benefited since 1948.

In this direction, one of the primary goals of the international community is to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the Security Council resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, which will live side by side with Israel in peace.

The recent tension caused in the region, raised by Israeli operation towards Gaza, has shown once again the necessity of finding an immediate solution to the conflict.

Turkey will resolutely maintain its moral, material and political support for its Palestinian brothers and sisters in the period ahead to overcome the harsh conditions in which they live, and make necessary contributions to the efforts of the international community in this direction.

Turkey supports in the strongest terms the initiatives taken by the Palestinian Authority for recognition in the international arena. I believe that the application for non-Member observer status to be submitted by the Palestinian Authority, which will be voted on by the General Assembly on the meaningful date of 29 November 2012, will be evaluated fairly by the international community, and I wish that the people of Palestine will attain the Palestinian State that is their most fundamental right.

By this opportunity, I reiterate, on behalf of the Turkish people and myself, that we will continue to stand in steadfast solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters, and I extend my sincere wishes for the wealth and happiness of the Palestinian people.

Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates

[Original: Arabic]

On behalf of the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates, I am pleased to express to you and your noble Committee our great thanks and appreciation for your stance and the gracious and noble efforts that you exert to increase the support of the international community for the

Palestinian question and expose the suffering endured by the Palestinian people because of the continuing Israeli policies of occupation and aggression against that people.

This year, our global demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinian people comes at a very critical stage of the Palestinian question, when it faces a fork in the road because not only does the path to Palestinian-Israeli peace talks remain blocked, but also the United Nations, to date, has failed to honour its obligations to the Palestinian people. Those obligations include recognition of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital, on the basis of its own relevant resolutions, foremost among which is General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947.

We in the United Arab Emirates are perturbed by the regrettable outcome of the Palestinian question, which gives no grounds for optimism for the Palestinian people, any of the States and peoples of the regions or other peace-loving peoples. We hold Israel responsible for this devastating international failure to resolve the manifold aspects of the Palestinian issue, particularly at a time when the military authorities continue their settlement expansion campaign and their onslaughts on the Palestinian territories, including the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif.

The United Arab Emirates rejects and strongly condemns all those dangerous Israeli policies, which constitute a major obstacle to the peace process, and the extension of its strategic expansionist plans, which aim to impose de facto demographic, political and legal change on the Palestinian territories and draw up boundaries for the Israeli State within the region at the expense of the legitimate borders of the Palestinian State before it resumes final status negotiations. We also hold the United Nations and the Quartet member States responsible for Israel's continued occupation of and aggression towards the Palestinian people. Today, more than ever before, we call for urgent and effective measures to be taken to ensure protection for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to its homeland and its territory. Firstly, the United Nations must recognize the Palestinian State within the June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. Such recognition will ensure that the Government of Israel, as the occupying Power, will be obliged to shoulder all its legal, moral and political responsibilities towards the Palestinian people, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, as well as its other obligations under the provisions of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We also request the international community and the Quartet to take a determined international stand in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and end the historic injustice to which it has been subjected by ensuring that justice is done. Real and greater international political pressure must be brought to bear on Israel to end its illegitimate campaign of building settlements on the Palestinian territories, dismantle existing settlements, halt its attacks against and lift its unfair and inhumane siege of the Gaza Strip, immediately release thousands of Palestinian prisoners and cease its violations of Islamic and Christian holy places and its Judaization of Jerusalem, if a suitable climate is to be created for the resumption of peace negotiations that are based on the principle of the two-State solution that is provided for in the road map. We underline that a just, comprehensive and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question and the situation in the Middle East cannot be achieved unless Israel is held legally accountable for its illegal aggressions and acts and unless it withdraws completely from all the Arab and Palestinian territory that it has occupied since 1967, including the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif, the Syrian Golan and the Lebanese territories, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative.

In conclusion, I reiterate, on behalf of the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates, that our support for the unrelenting, just and noble struggle of the fraternal Palestinian people will continue until it gains its freedom, independence and the right to self-determination and to establish

an independent State on the earth of its homeland, Palestine, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. We urge the international community and, in particular, the donor States and economic institutions to increase their support and political, development and economic assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian National Authority, in order to enable them to obtain freedom and independence and a life of dignity in a homeland that enjoys sovereignty and independence, just as all other peoples of the world do.

Truong Tan Sang, President of Viet Nam

[Original: Vietnamese]
[Unofficial translation]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, 29 November, on behalf of the State and the people of Viet Nam, I would like to extend to Your Excellencies, and through Your Excellencies to the Palestinian people, greetings of solidarity and warmest congratulations.

Viet Nam has consistently supported the just cause of the struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable rights. Viet Nam is of the view that the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which the Palestinian question is the nucleus, can only be solved through peaceful negotiations aimed at a comprehensive and just solution on the basis of respecting the legitimate interests of all concerned parties, especially the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish a State of Palestine in their homeland. In that spirit, Viet Nam supports Palestine's efforts to soon become a full Member of the United Nations. Viet Nam supports all efforts of the international community that will bring the Middle East peace process forward and urges the concerned parties to work together to realize the achieved agreements, thus contributing to peace and stability in the region.

On this occasion, the State and the people of Viet Nam reaffirm the strong support for the just cause and the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. We firmly believe that the struggle of the Palestinian people, with the strong support of the international community, will achieve full victory.

B. Messages from Governments

Oman

[Original: Arabic]

On this occasion, I should like to express my gratitude and appreciation for your efforts, through the Committee, to defend the rights of the Palestinian people and enable it to exercise all its inalienable rights, which have been affirmed by numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

As we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we should like to commend your efforts and the assistance that you provide in gaining recognition for the suffering of the Palestinian people that is caused by the Israeli occupation. Oman's participation in the commemoration of this International Day is based on its unwavering policy with regard to the Palestinian people and its repeated demand that a just and comprehensive settlement should be found

to the question of Palestine that will permit the fraternal Palestinian people to live in dignity, peace and security, like the other peoples of the world, inside secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

On the basis of the foregoing, we affirm that Oman has at the forefront of its priorities the question of the Middle East and, in particular, the achievement of peace and security, the just and comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue and the need for Israel to withdraw from all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Syrian Golan and the other areas in South Lebanon that remain under occupation.

It is beyond question that the violations that Israeli forces continue to perpetrate in contravention of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the course of such savage onslaughts on the Gaza Strip as, inter alia, Operation Cast Lead, its attacks on such relief convoys as the Freedom Flotilla, the sustained siege that is imposed on the Gaza Strip, the policy of collective punishment that is pursued in Gaza and other inhumane practices, including the continuation and expansion of the settlement policy and establishment of new settlements on Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem, and the separation barrier, have shown the whole world that Israel does not want peace. The international community is today expressing its backing and support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people and the exercise of its inalienable rights. It is also expressing its hope that the necessary pressure will be brought to bear on the occupying forces to halt their policy of violence and pursue the path of comprehensive peace.

The Government of Oman, which welcomed the direct negotiations that took place in Washington, D.C., in September 2010 and the position that was put forward by the United States of America at that time, believes that encouragement must be given to negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of the Israeli occupation. In order to break the impasse, settlement must be completely stopped, and Oman urges the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel in that respect. The world and, in particular, the United Nations must take action and fulfil its obligation to find a just and comprehensive solution. The Government of Oman believes that if a Palestinian State is established within the 4 June 1967 borders and internationally recognized as a full Member of the United Nations, there will eventually be a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In conclusion, we congratulate you again on your own and the Committee's efforts and assure you of Oman's absolute support for the Palestinian people and for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian issue on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

South Africa

[Original: English]

The Government of South Africa joins the international community in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Government of South Africa, in line with its long-standing, unwavering commitment to Palestinian freedom, fully supports Palestine's bid for observer State status at the United Nations, which will be voted on at the General Assembly today. This vote coincides with the sixty-fifth commemoration of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947, which paved the way for a two-State solution. The Government regards this vote as a necessary step in the

advancement of the Palestinian cause and calls upon all countries to support Palestine in this endeavour.

The Government of South Africa believes that the only way to bring about lasting peace in the Middle East is to have a comprehensive and unconditional negotiated settlement to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories and Israel's continued blockade of Gaza. This will contribute towards peace and security throughout the Middle East. The ongoing delay in achieving such a settlement leads to an unending cycle of violence, as tragically witnessed during the last two weeks once again, with sustained short- and medium-range rocket fire from Palestinian militants in Gaza into Israel and Israeli missile and naval artillery counterstrikes into the overpopulated Palestinian coastal enclave, leading to the deaths of more than 150 persons and the wounding of hundreds more, the vast majority of whom were Palestinians, including many women and children.

South Africa also remains strongly critical of the ongoing defiance of the Government of Israel in refusing to halt the illegal settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian West Bank and East Jerusalem, thereby complicating any possible resumption of substantial negotiation. We therefore, on this day, once again call on Israel to stop its policy of settlement expansion, including in East Jerusalem, and to realize that the only way to achieve peace is by creating an environment for a two-State solution, where Israel will be able to exist side by side in peace with a viable and fully independent Palestinian State within internationally recognized borders, based on those of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Government of South Africa is of the view that a vote by the General Assembly today to grant Palestine observer State status in the United Nations will assist in bringing about this long-delayed outcome, seen by most of the international community as essential to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. As former President Mandela once said, "We in South Africa can only really be free once our Palestinian brothers achieve their freedom."

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

[Original: Spanish]
[Unofficial translation]

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, celebrated today, 29 November 2012, reiterates its strong support for the self-determination and independence of the State of Palestine, under internationally recognized 1967 borders, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 and relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including, among others, resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 446 (1979), 478 (1980), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008).

Venezuela condemns the repressive actions of the Israeli political and military elite, which violate international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the State terrorism policy of targeted murders against the heroic Palestinian people, who tirelessly fight for fully exercising their inalienable right to self-determination, expressed in the existence of a sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting in a climate of peace and security, in accordance with international law.

The Bolivarian Government condemns the recent military actions in Gaza by the occupying Power, in particular the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force, including bombings that caused the loss of human lives, especially children and the elderly, and the destruction of buildings and staple social infrastructure, making the already difficult situation suffered by the Palestinians for over 45 years increasingly difficult and traumatic, owing to the illegal occupation of their territory.

Venezuela also reiterates its rejection of the illegal construction of settlements for Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which threatens the territorial integrity of the State of Palestine. The Bolivarian Government demands the immediate cessation of this policy and the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from those territories.

It also demands of Israel, the occupying Power, to take the necessary steps to immediately release the Palestinian prisoners, including children and elected officials.

Moreover, Venezuela endorses the Solidarity Declaration on Palestine, adopted during the sixteenth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Tehran, in which the Heads of State and Government expressed, inter alia, “their deep regret that, due to the deplorable measures of Israel, the occupying Power, the [Non-Aligned Movement] Committee on Palestine was unable to convene the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting in Ramallah, Palestine, on 5 August 2012, which had been planned as a demonstration of the Movement’s solidarity with the Palestinian people. They condemned Israel’s provocative action, in contravention of international law and its obligations as an occupying Power, which prevented the Members of the Committee from witnessing firsthand the grave situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and from directly conveying to the Palestinian people and their leadership the Movement’s longstanding, principled support for the just cause of Palestine and commitment to the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in all its aspects”.

The Government of Commander Hugo Chávez Frías supports the request of Palestine to achieve the status of observer State within the United Nations system. In this sense, the Venezuelan authorities are hopeful that the State of Palestine is admitted in the immediate future as a full Member of the United Nations. In this order, the Venezuelan authorities urge the United States to abandon its obstructionist and intransigent attitude, which continues to prevent this legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people, presented by the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, from materializing.

Finally, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela makes an urgent call to reactivate the peace process that would allow two States and to move forward in a fair and credible peace process, bearing in mind the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of territory for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map.

That peace process must ensure an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territory and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination in a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, as well as a fair solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

C. Messages from Ministers for Foreign Affairs

Mourad Medelci, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria

[Original: French]

It is my honour to convey to you a message from His Excellency Mourad Medelci, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as follows:

Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People affords us the opportunity to pay well-deserved tribute to the United Nations for its prominent role in focusing the world's attention on the question of Palestine.

It provides us as well with the opportunity to express our deep appreciation to Mr. Vuk Jeremić for his skill in presiding over the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and to convey our appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its selfless labours.

On this solemn occasion it is fitting to turn our thoughts, in a fraternal vein, to the Palestinian people, victims of a conflict that has raged for over 60 years now. At the same time, we are moved by this observance to maintain our support for a sustainable peace in Palestine.

The twenty-ninth of November, enshrined under General Assembly resolution 32/40 of 2 December 1977, marks a particular high point in the history of the United Nations this year, recalling as it does to the conscience of the world that it must move beyond the duty of solidarity to collective, resolute action to emancipate the Palestinian people from the yoke of occupation.

The peace-loving people inspired by the principles and objectives of the Charter who come together each year in support of the Palestinian people pose to the international community the question of the future of Palestine, cradle of civilizations and religions since time immemorial.

Algeria, whose support for this just struggle has never flagged, and which played host at the birth of the State of Palestine when its establishment was proclaimed in exile in 1988, takes this joyous occasion to renew its unshakeable solidarity with the Palestinian people in its legitimate quest to exercise its right to self-determination and to live in peace in a sovereign and viable State with Al-Quds as its capital.

Our meeting today is of threefold significance. It is, of course, the anniversary of 29 November 1947, the day upon which the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine.

It also falls at the same time as an important event, the consideration by the current session of the General Assembly of Palestine's request for recognition as a non-Member observer State.

It follows close upon particularly tragic events caused by Israeli military aggression of unusual violence against civilians in Gaza, aggression that was premeditated and planned by a highly equipped army.

This grim situation, which returns us to the impasse which has characterized the Palestinian situation for more than half a century, causes us deep sadness.

For how can we explain to the younger generation that the 1947 resolution on the partition of Palestine, which would have allowed the Palestinian people to obtain justice and a State of their own, could not be implemented?

How can we accept the unjust, inhumane blockade imposed on Gaza and its people, who are struggling to survive under an Israeli scorched-earth policy and other practices that were thought, following the defeat of Nazism and colonialism, to belong irrevocably to the past?

How can we accept that there has been no follow-up to the recommendations contained in the report on the Israeli military aggression in international waters against the humanitarian flotilla produced by the Panel of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council?

How are we to understand the right to self-defence that has been granted to Israel, while that same right has been withheld from an entire people that is struggling against the occupation of its land and against repeated military aggression whose aim is to break its heroic resistance?

The time has come to put an end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people. They are the target of a policy of victimization put in place by the Israeli leaders and held sacrosanct so as to legitimate violence, impunity and facts on the ground. The latter are used to fuel the conflict created in the Middle East by those same leaders.

Swift measures are needed to eliminate the harmful effects and dangerous consequences of this policy of blaming humanity as a whole, a policy which absolves Israel of its crimes.

The international community cannot close its eyes to the Israeli policy of sowing hate and terror, a policy that has resulted in thousands of victims, prisoners and exiles, as well as the continued illegal construction of the wall of separation and the settlements, not to mention the Judaization of the holy city of Al-Quds that is currently taking place.

These crimes cannot go unpunished. The Palestinian people must have justice. More than ever, the Palestinians need the help and genuine engagement of all people of good will to put an end to their travails.

The United Nations, which has a historic responsibility with regard to the settlement of this protracted conflict, must act urgently and decisively to put in place the conditions necessary for the speedy implementation of its own decisions.

In that context, the international community must grasp the exceptional nature of this Day of Solidarity so that together we may welcome Palestine into our midst as a non-Member observer State.

Everything possible must be done to eliminate the causes of despair and bring about a rebirth of hope for a fair and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. That solution is within our grasp and, it should be emphasized, remains central to the Middle East issue.

Algeria has just marked the fiftieth anniversary of its membership in the United Nations and, in the aftermath of the achievement of independence by colonial peoples, it supports the unique role of the United Nations, custodian of international legality, in the emancipation of occupied peoples.

We also strongly urge the international community to pool its efforts to move the Palestinian issue to a position of high priority on the agenda of the United Nations in 2013.”

Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

As has become customary, pursuant to resolution 32/40 B, adopted by the General Assembly in 1977, this date is an opportune occasion every year to commemorate the day on which the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) in 1947 on the partition of Palestine. This led the following year to the tragedy known as Al-Nakba, which resulted in more than three quarters of historic Palestine being seized by force, the destruction of 531 Palestinian towns and villages and the expulsion or displacement of 85 per cent of the population. Consequently, some 4.6 million Palestine refugees still live scattered throughout the Middle East.

On an occasion such as this, it is appropriate to reaffirm our unequivocal solidarity with the Palestinian people and Cuba’s strong and unwavering support for all actions aimed at achieving recognition of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and for Palestine’s right to join the United Nations as a full Member.

Despite the fact that Palestine’s just claim to membership of the United Nations is supported by the vast majority, a few countries are striving to undermine that aspiration. We believe that the Security Council should rule on this matter without further delay, and should do so in the affirmative, in accordance with the express desire of the overwhelming majority of States. The General Assembly must act decisively, in its own right, in the face of the paralysis of the Security Council under threat of the veto of the United States.

Palestine has demonstrated its commitment to the multilateral system, working responsibly and professionally within UNESCO, of which it became a full member State in 2011. Cuba vehemently rejects the financial retaliation against UNESCO by the Government of the United States for its decision to recognize the rights of Palestine by granting it membership.

The Palestinian authorities have made progress in strengthening their State institutions in recent years. Numerous reports by the United Nations and other agencies have recognized the stability of Palestinian institutions and the Palestinians’ ability to exercise their sovereignty as an independent State.

However, the Israeli military occupation and the increase in attacks on the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, together with the policy of illegal settlements and other colonial practices, show that Israel wishes to take control of the entire West Bank, making it impossible to

establish on the ground a viable Palestinian State within the pre-1967 borders and, consequently, to resolve the conflict in a just and balanced manner.

We call for a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the defence of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty in an independent State. The successive resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council that call for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories should be observed.

We reiterate the need to redouble efforts to resolve the adverse situation of Palestinian refugees, in accordance with the rules and principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The worsening political, economic, social and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as a result of Israel's continued illegal policies and practices, including serious human rights violations and ongoing war crimes, is of serious concern to both Cuba and the other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

My country reaffirms its opposition to the intensification of the Israeli policy of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. That policy is a serious violation of international law and is contrary to the objectives of the peace process. It involves the ongoing confiscation of Palestinian land; the illegal construction of settlements; changes to the demographics of the population; excavations that destroy the historical and archaeological heritage of the Palestinian people; the imposition of arbitrary and racist travel restrictions throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem; the demolition of houses; the eviction of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem; and the systematic destruction of the rudimentary Palestinian economic infrastructure, among other acts of incitement and provocation and illegal attacks perpetrated by extremist settlers against Palestinians and their holy sites. All of this makes the current situation very volatile and dangerous.

In addition to the immediate cessation of those measures and practices, Cuba calls for an end to the prolonged and illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, the immediate, unconditional and complete lifting of the cruel and illegal blockade of Gaza and the opening of border crossings and checkpoints, in order to allow humanitarian aid and essential supplies and goods to enter freely and routinely and to facilitate the movement of persons to and from the Gaza Strip. Similarly, Cuba condemns the construction of the "Wall of Shame" that isolates entire communities and hampers the establishment of a Palestinian State.

The indiscriminate and disproportionate use of Israeli military force against defenceless Palestinian civilians, the forced detentions, and the torture, mistreatment and abuse of political prisoners in Israeli prisons must cease.

It has been a priority for Cuba and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to seek a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to defend the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and achieve sovereignty in an independent State.

The Conferences of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement have reiterated this commitment at the highest level. During the sixteenth summit conference, held in August 2012 in Tehran, the non-aligned countries re-examined the protracted crisis situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and expressed deep regret at the suffering of the Palestinian people under the prolonged and brutal Israeli military occupation. Similarly, they

condemned the continued denial of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their lands and the right to full enjoyment of their own sovereign and independent State. They also supported the recognition of Palestine as a State and its admission as a full Member of the United Nations, convinced that the achievement of this objective will be a major step towards the advancement of freedom, dignity, stability and peace for the Palestinian people.

The international community cannot remain indifferent and silent in the face of the abuses and violations perpetrated by Israel with impunity against the Palestinian people. The cycle of violence in that territory, including its spread into the West Bank, must be halted. The historical debt to the Palestinian people must be paid.

On this momentous date, Cuba reiterates that it will not stop at calling for comprehensive, just and definitive peace for the Palestinian people and the peoples of the Middle East in general and proper respect for all their rights. The Arab peoples, without exception, can always count on the full support of the Cuban people.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration. I reiterate the strong support of the people and Government of Cuba and their solidarity with the important Committee that you chair.

Koichiro Gemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

[Original: Japanese]
(*Unofficial translation*)

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express anew, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, my sincere hope for the realization of peace in the Middle East wherein a Palestinian State and Israel can coexist in peace and security.

Japan understands the Palestinians' aspiration for State-building and supports a two-State solution through negotiations. Recognizing that the solution of the Middle East peace issue has become a more urgent matter for regional stability as the situation becomes more fluid in the Middle East region, which has been undergoing historical changes in the so-called Arab Spring, Japan strongly calls for both Palestine and Israel to resume direct negotiations soon.

It is necessary for both parties to act to enhance mutual trust and to resume negotiations. In particular, Israeli settlement activities are a violation of international law, and such acts go against the efforts by the international community towards the resumption of direct negotiations. Japan has reiterated its call to Israel to fully freeze the settlement activities.

Regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip, Japan welcomes the agreement on a ceasefire reached by Israel and the Palestinian armed groups and strongly hopes that it will be a lasting one. In this regard, Japan has been working to realize the ceasefire and highly appreciates the mediation efforts by Egypt, the United States of America and other relevant countries and organizations. Japan continues to support the efforts of the international community towards the stabilization of the Gaza Strip and progress of the Middle East peace process, and provides its utmost cooperation.

Japan has been assisting the Palestinian people, focusing on humanitarian aid, assistance for the State-building efforts, confidence-building, and enhancing economic self-sustainability. Japan has

extended assistance of approximately \$1.3 billion in total since 1993. In addition, Japan promotes assistance to the Palestinians in cooperation with East Asian countries and is planning to hold the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development next February in Tokyo, with the attendance of East Asian countries and international organizations. Japan will actively promote assistance for the building of a future independent, viable Palestinian state.

Japan will remain actively engaged in the international efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Pierrot Jocelyn Rajaonarivelo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Madagascar

[Original: French]

Allow me to pay tribute to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, His Excellency Abdou Salam Diallo, thanks to whose energy and dedication the Committee was able to complete its work successfully again this year.

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Madagascar is honoured to add its voice to those of the entire international community.

I am pleased to avail myself of the opportunity offered by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon this year on 29 November, as we observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to discuss the issues of peace, security and development in Palestine.

Despite the passage of decades, the status of Palestine and the peace process, which ought to continue to aim for achievement of the two-State solution, must remain our ultimate focus, thereby justifying our enduring patience.

Recognition by the General Assembly of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations should be the first stage, serving as evidence of the solidarity the international community owes the Palestinian people.

In that context, Madagascar welcomes the appointment on 4 September 2012 of James W. Rawley of the United States of America as Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, a post equivalent in rank to that of Assistant Secretary-General.

Our Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, has spared no effort in the quest to resolve the issue of Palestine, launching intensive consultations with a range of regional organizations and Member States with a view to the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution granting the State of Palestine the status of a non-Member observer State of the United Nations.

In this regard, we support efforts by the Quartet to overcome current obstacles in order to achieve a settlement before the deadline set for the end of the year and call on the Quartet partners, in consultation with the parties, to lay out in the coming months a new and credible political path for the future.

The Government of Madagascar also welcomes the findings of the fourth session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, held on 6 and 7 October 2012.

We are strongly opposed to continued settlements and reiterate our call to the international community to take specific, effective measures to get Israel to break off its settlement activities.

We also commend the partnership agreement initiative advanced by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, His Excellency Filippo Grandi, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, His Excellency Bob Carr, the aim of which is to support the Agency's main programmes.

Moreover, Madagascar is of the view that it would be highly useful for the Security Council to dispatch a mission to the region to investigate options for a lasting and appropriate settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Along with the international community, Madagascar has a moral duty and a political responsibility to put an end to the sufferings of the Palestinian people, sufferings that have gone on now for upwards of 60 years. It is therefore crucial for us to show solidarity and redouble our efforts to succeed in achieving the long-awaited objectives of peace and development for the Palestinian people.

Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico

[Original: Spanish]

Historically, Mexico has supported the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent and sovereign State that is politically and economically viable and coexists with its neighbours within secure and internationally recognized borders, a State that guarantees a peaceful and prosperous future for the Palestinian people.

To commemorate this important date, Mexico reiterates its support for all international efforts to seek a comprehensive and definitive settlement of the conflict in accordance with international law through dialogue between the parties.

Mexico pledges its unstinting support and assistance for the well-being of the Palestinian people, in order to allow them to exercise their rights and bring about stability in the Middle East.

I wish you every success in all the activities that are undertaken as part of this day of commemoration, and take this opportunity to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

Albert F. Del Rosario, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines

[Original: English]

The Philippines joins the international community in celebrating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Philippines congratulates Palestine on its successful bid for membership in UNESCO in 2011. The Philippines voted in favour of Palestine's membership consistent with its support for the Palestinian people's aspirations for self-rule and self-determination as well as greater participation in international bodies.

The Philippines is strongly in favour of a two-State solution where an Israeli State and a Palestinian State coexist peacefully. This is in consonance with our policy to promote peace and security in the Middle East.

The Philippines hopes that there will be progress in the peace process between the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel so that a region that has known conflict and animosity for far too long may finally know peace.

Prince Saud Al Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

[Original: Arabic]
[unofficial translation]

It gives me pleasure on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts, since its inception in 1975, dedicated to defending the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, especially their right to self-determination, and to establish their State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in implementation of the United Nations resolutions adopted in this regard.

The participation of the Member States to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people on this important day is the least that can be done to remind us of the suffering of the Palestinian people under the intransigence of the Israeli army and its continuous failure to carry out its duties and obligations under the United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Moreover, the Israeli forces continue their disregard for international condemnations for preventing the Palestinians from exercising their basic legitimate rights, a matter that will negatively reflect not only on the Palestinian people but on the Middle East region as a whole. Your esteemed Committee has already confirmed all that since its first report in 1976, as the Palestinian issue is undoubtedly the biggest problem facing the Middle East for quite some time.

As the problem of the Middle East remains one of the biggest problems that hinder international peace and security, and as the Israeli colonization is almost the only one existing in the world after the end of the era of colonialism and the decline of apartheid, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia joins all peace-loving States on this day to remind us of the suffering endured by the Palestinian people manifested in the use of armed force to kill and terrorize the defenceless Palestinian civilian population, the occupation of their land and the expansion in building new Israeli settlements, the construction of a separating wall, the arrest and imprisonment of thousands of Palestinian prisoners and the use of forced deportation.

For your information, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia never fell short in working towards the establishment of peace and to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. Emanating from the Kingdom's commitment towards achieving a just and comprehensive peace, it presented the Arab Peace Initiative, which emphasized the Kingdom's commitment within the Arab system to achieve peace based on the rules of international law.

On this occasion, I reiterate, on behalf of Saudi Arabia, the importance of continued international support for the brotherly Palestinian people in order for them to secure their legitimate rights. Furthermore, I call upon all States Members of the United Nations to recognize a Palestinian

State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, and to support the Palestinian quest to obtain full membership in the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the efforts of your esteemed Committee, wishing that it continues its tireless work until the Palestinians become able to exercise all their legitimate and natural rights, including the right of return to their lands within their internationally recognized State.

**Walid Al-Moualem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Emigrants of the Syrian Arab Republic**

[Original: Arabic]

I have the honour to address the Committee on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and to express my appreciation for the role that you play in convening this important international gathering to remind the world of the tragedy of the fraternal Palestinian people, which continues to struggle to obtain its legitimate rights to freedom, independence and liberation from the occupation to which it has been subjected for 64 years.

This annual expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people symbolizes the stance of all peoples that love peace and justice alongside the Palestinian people in its struggle to achieve the right of self-determination, which has been wrested from it, and the right to establish an independent, sovereign State, with Al-Quds as its capital, on its national territory, and to ensure the right of return for the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, foremost among which are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), concerning the occupied Syrian Golan, and General Assembly resolution 194 (III), concerning the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes. Just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through the implementation of those resolutions, which the international community has unanimously determined should be the terms of reference for any peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and through the revival of the peace process that began in Madrid in 1991, and the Arab Peace Initiative that was adopted at the summit meeting of the Arab League held in Beirut in 2002.

This year, the International Day of Solidarity coincides with the renewed attempt by Palestine to join the international family as a Member State of the United Nations. In that context, the Syrian Arab Republic renews its support for this legitimate trend towards recognition of a free, independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian territory that was occupied in 1967. If Palestine is granted the status of Member State of the Organization that brings together the international family, it will inevitably make a major contribution to the international efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We must stress here that this annual display of solidarity with the ordeal of the Palestinian people that is the outcome of the continuation of Israeli practices that have been violating international law for more than 60 years and which constitute a continual threat to the precepts and principles of that law, and to the stability and development of the Middle East, must remind us all of the need to stress the latent causes for the decrease in the credibility of the international Organization and in its effectiveness in bringing peace and stability to the world. The situation also prompts us to give serious consideration to the need to reform the United Nations in such a way as will ensure international justice that is based on a commitment by all States to respect and apply the Charter of

the United Nations and ensure the firm establishment of a truly democratic mechanism for the taking of international decisions.

Year after year, the Palestinian people has looked on from its camps and housing in the diaspora and from various countries throughout the world while initiatives come and go, statements are made in one place and silence reigns in another, and there is no change in their abject situation. We may talk here about the long experience that Syria has of the Palestinian issue, and its close links with that issue, whether we refer to the recovery of the occupied Syrian Golan or to the fact that Syria hosts on its territory more than 500,000 Palestinian refugees. Israel continues to refuse to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to freedom and life. It continues to build the racist separation barrier and to tighten its stranglehold and siege of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. As for Israel's policy of biting off chunks of Palestinian land, uprooting olive trees, expanding settlements, confiscating the identity cards of Jerusalemites, destroying Palestinian homes, holding thousands of Palestinian prisoners under arbitrary detention and carrying out assassinations, it lays the West's sermonizing on human rights and human dignity open to serious question.

Finally, I should like, through this noble forum, to address the conscience of the world and ask all States Members of the United Nations to give serious consideration to the need to bear moral responsibility for the suffering of the Palestinian people and to make genuine moves to end its long tragedy. That people, just like every other people in the world, has the right to realize its existential hopes and aspirations and live in security, dignity and freedom. That will never happen unless there is a will to end Israel's heedlessness and its contempt for United Nations resolutions and law, and unless the major Powers stop putting political interests before all the moral and legal considerations that mankind had been trying for centuries to firmly establish and ensure respect for.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia

[Original: Arabic]

Tunisia joins the international community in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people. This year's celebration coincides with some momentous events in the history of the question of Palestine, the most important of which is the request of Palestine to become a non-Member observer State of the United Nations.

This commemoration is also taking place just a few days after a fresh Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip resulted in the addition of hundreds of Palestinians to the scores of martyrs whose lives the Palestinian resistance has steadfastly and adamantly offered up for more than 60 years, out of its belief in the justice of its cause and in defence of the Palestinian people's usurped right to its land, its honour, independence, justice, freedom and dignity.

In the age of democracy and human rights, Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territory is a raw wound on the human conscience. It is also a flagrant violation of international and customary law and human rights instruments. Since the adoption of the partition plan on 29 November 1947, the Palestinian people has endured great hardship and injustice. Never before has the world seen such killing, destruction and displacement or such a suffocating economic embargo. Israel has targeted essential facilities, bulldozed land and destroyed property. It continues to defile the land by building settlements, and it is forging ahead with its efforts to Judaize Jerusalem and change its historical and geographical features in preparation for declaring it the capital of Israel. All of this is taking place in the face of a deafening international silence.

In view of those violations, Tunisia reaffirms its conviction that the Palestinian question remains at the heart of the conflict in the region, and that it will continue to support that cause at all levels.

On this occasion, Tunisia calls on all international and regional actors to support Palestine's request to be granted the status of non-Member observer State because it is a legitimate request that is based on the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions. This request is a test of the world's conscience and the support it garners will be a gauge of the international community's belief in the fundamental values that underpin peoples' right to equality, justice and self-determination.

Tunisia will continue to support the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital, and return to its land, as well as all its other legitimate rights, which are spelled out in international law and are universal moral imperatives. It calls on all Powers that believe in truth and justice to support the Palestinian people to attain its legitimate right to independence, and to reject all forms of occupation and the usurpation of territory.

D. Messages from intergovernmental organizations having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent offices at Headquarters

European Union

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the European Union wishes to convey the following message.

The acceding country Croatia, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia,¹ the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to a two-State solution and its conviction that the ongoing changes across the Arab world make the need for progress on the Middle East peace process all the more urgent. Heeding the aspirations of the people in the region, including those of Palestinians for statehood and those of Israelis for security, is a crucial element for lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Ending the conflict is a fundamental interest of the European Union as well as of the parties themselves and the wider region, and it can be achieved through a comprehensive peace agreement, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, including land for peace, the road map, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative. The

¹ Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process. Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Agreement and the European Economic Area.

European Union recalls the applicability of international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the applicability of Fourth Geneva Convention.

The European Union will make every effort, along with its partners in the Quartet as well as Arab partners, to support the resumption of substantive negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians with a view to achieving a two-State solution. The European Union is convinced that helping the parties achieve the goal of a two-State solution is the most important way in which all actors of the international community can show their solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The European Union followed with great concern the situation in the Gaza Strip and Israel and deeply regrets the loss of civilian lives on both sides. The European Union condemned the indiscriminate rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel. It welcomes the ceasefire that has been reached in the Gaza Strip and Israel and will continue its efforts to ensure a sustainable solution to the present situation in the Gaza Strip, as it believes that this is crucial for ending all violence and enhancing security in the region.

In addition to the strong support of the European Union for the negotiation process, the European Union and its member States also show their solidarity with the Palestinian people in a number of other ways.

The European Union commends the work of the Palestinian Authority in building the institutions of the future State of Palestine. The European Union is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority and a crucial political and economic partner of all parties in the region. The European Union wishes to stress the crucial importance of the continuation of the Palestinian State-building process, which the European Union will continue to actively support.

The European Union continues to call for intra-Palestinian reconciliation behind President Mahmoud Abbas, in line with the principles set out in his speech of 4 May 2011, as an important element for the unity of a future Palestinian State and for reaching a two-State solution.

The European Union and its member States also show solidarity with the Palestinian people through their support of the activities of UNRWA and remain the Agency's largest, most predictable and reliable donor. The contribution of the European Union up till the end of May 2012, including that of member States, represented 66 per cent of all donor contributions to the Agency's regular budget.

In this context, the European Union urges all members of the United Nations to increase their financial support for the Palestinian Authority and for UNRWA.

The European Union will continue to work with its partners within the Quartet, as well as with the other actors of the international community, to contribute to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The European Union will continue to provide political and financial support to this effect and, in so doing, will continue to support the Palestinian people in the pursuit of its legitimate aspirations

Organization of Islamic Cooperation; Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]
[Unofficial translation]

This international meeting taking place on 29 November every year to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in accordance with a General Assembly resolution, is but an affirmation of continued international solidarity with the Palestinian people and of the responsibility of the international community towards the Palestinian cause.

On this occasion, I am pleased to express profound gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations and all its organs. In particular, I would like to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its effective efforts and initiatives in support of the Palestinian cause. This contributes to the reinforcement of international solidarity with and support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights.

We are meeting today under a very dangerous political climate for the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds al-Sharif. Indeed, Israel, the occupying force, has intensified its illegal policies with the aim of isolating Jerusalem from its Palestinian neighbourhood, changing its demographic nature and killing its identity through continuous construction of settlements, the apartheid wall, confiscation of properties, restriction of movements and desecration of Islamic and Christian holy places. Israel has also continued its violations and attacks which have made it impossible for the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate rights. It restricts their daily lives and undermines the unity of their territories. These attacks constitute a series of a blatant infringements of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and United Nations resolutions. This would ultimately scuttle the chance to establish a contiguous and viable Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.

Israel's escalating military aggression and the illegal blockade it imposes on the Gaza Strip are not only a collective punishment against 1.5 million Palestinians in the Strip; they also represent the continuation of a war crime against humanity, which must stop. I would like, from this platform, to call on the international community and the Security Council to assume their responsibilities and to take the measures necessary for the immediate cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, and for lifting the unjust Israeli closure imposed on them, ending their humanitarian suffering, providing them with protection, and facilitating the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.

Palestine's accession to full membership of UNESCO last year is an international recognition of Palestinians' rights. This achievement illustrates concrete and positive support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. In this regard, I can confirm the absolute support of OIC for the Palestinian political efforts and endeavour to obtain recognition for the State of Palestine at the United Nations. I also assure you of our constant support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost of which is the right to establish an independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders and with Jerusalem as its capital.

Notwithstanding the hindrances faced by the Palestinian issue, the plight of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli detention centres constitutes a case of denial of justice. It is a crime illustrated by the worst and most unjust inhuman practices perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against Palestinian prisoners. In the light of that, we at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation affirm our commitment to the mission of the prisoners just as we support their resilience. We call for effective action in order to defend their basic rights, internationalize their issue and ensure that it is

included in the agenda of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to respect the principles of international humanitarian law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In conclusion, I would like to seize this opportunity to confirm again the support of OIC and its solidarity with the Palestinian people in their effort to reclaim their established national rights, including their rights to return, to self-determination and to establish an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian land occupied by Israel since 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital, and to arrive at a just solution to the issue of Palestinian refugees, in accordance with Security Council resolution 194 (III).

E. Messages from civil society organizations

International Progress Organization (Vienna)

[Original: English]

Exactly a year ago, on 29 November 2011, I expressed, before this august gathering, my concern that “talk of peace has become virtually meaningless” in the face of continuing aggression and occupation of Palestinian and Arab land, and of an ever more hostile and determined strategy of the occupying Power to continuously expand control over and possession of Palestinian territory, including exploitation of its resources.

This policy has not been reversed, or even softened, in any way since our last meeting; over decades, subsequent Governments of Israel have followed a strategy, and worked out corresponding legislation, to create ever “new facts on the ground”. This has now resulted in a situation where what is at stake is the very viability of the State of Palestine, which requires a contiguous territory and sovereign control over its resources, including the most essential of all under the conditions of the Middle East: water.

The recent confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians, in fact a war against the population of Gaza, has highlighted once more, and in a most tragic fashion, the predicament of the citizens of Palestine, living under the de facto occupation of a powerful neighbour: any move on their part to exercise their legitimate rights, and to resist aggression or pervasive control over their daily life, is immediately dismissed as an illegitimate act against the occupying State.

In this context, namely, under such conditions of effective military domination, the people of Palestine have an understandable interest in having their inalienable rights acknowledged by the international community. When the occupying Power tries to undermine their bid for statehood and continuously expands its colonial settlements in the Palestinian territories, it is only fair – and perfectly reasonable – that the Palestinian Authority aspires to the status of non-Member observer State at the United Nations.

This is an exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination, and not an illegitimate “unilateral act”. Let us be clear about that term: the expulsion of the Palestinians from their native land in 1948 was a unilateral act; the extension of the borders of the State of Israel by military force was a unilateral act; the annexation of East Jerusalem and of the Syrian Golan Heights were unilateral acts; the expropriation of Palestinian land, the building and continuous expansion of Jewish settlements were, and are, unilateral acts by the occupying Power, not to speak of the innumerable

violations of international humanitarian law, in particular the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in the course of these acts.

In contrast, a people's claiming its inalienable right to self-determination and, consequently, statehood, and expecting the international community to recognize this step, is not a unilateral act in the meaning of the law.

Especially in light of General Assembly resolution 181(II) of 29 November 1947, it is entirely appropriate that the world Organization, under whose auspices we are assembled today, accords recognition, and in a legally specific way, to the Palestinian people's sovereign decision to establish their own State in the land of their fathers.

Since last year's application for full membership of the United Nations, however, it has again become painfully obvious that the Security Council, because of the veto rule, is unable to act on this matter. This has highlighted the role of the General Assembly, which, according to the Charter, is in a position to acknowledge the existence of Palestine as a State without the intercession of the Security Council, albeit in the category of observer. In view of the universal membership of the Assembly, the democratic legitimacy of such a decision, if eventually taken, is beyond any doubt. Let us not forget that more than 130 States Members of the United Nations have already individually recognized the State of Palestine.

Observer State status will, *inter alia*, enable the Palestinians to claim their international legal rights without third parties as intermediaries – and it will potentially be an important step towards ending impunity for violations of international humanitarian law by the occupying Power in Palestine.

All those who are committed to international democracy and the rule of law will certainly reject the pressure exerted by some States upon the Palestinian Authority to agree to an amendment to the draft resolution before the Assembly that would imply that the State of Palestine does not accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The end of impunity for the commission of international crimes in Palestine could indeed be an important and substantial contribution to a peaceful settlement of the underlying conflict, reasoning that the Security Council has already applied, and upheld, in other conflict situations where it created *ad hoc* tribunals or referred situations to the International Criminal Court as a measure to restore or maintain international peace and security.

We also have to reject all forms of economic pressure and political threats *vis-à-vis* the Palestinian Authority in connection with the draft resolution on observer State status, such as the withholding of tax revenues that rightfully belong to the Palestinian administration. To link the exercise of an inalienable right to punitive measures effectively amounts to political blackmail; such acts are totally illegitimate and diametrically opposed to fundamental principles of the rule of law. At its current session, on 24 September 2012, the General Assembly solemnly confirmed those very rules, and I quote: “We recognize that the rule of law applies to all States equally ... and that respect for and promotion of the rule of law and justice should guide all of their activities and accord predictability and legitimacy to their actions.”²

The reality on the ground in Palestine could not be further away from this lofty ideal.

² General Assembly resolution 67/1, para. 2..

The International Progress Organization sincerely hopes that the international community, represented in the General Assembly of the United Nations, will follow up on the eventual recognition of Palestine as observer State and take additional legal or political measures so that the strategy being followed by the occupying Power of colonial expansion in the West Bank, which threatens the very viability of the Palestinian State, and of collective punishment, in particular of the population of Gaza, will come to an end. As regards the policy vis-à-vis Gaza, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, David Cameron, has already declared in 2010 that the Israeli blockade has turned the Gaza Strip into a prison camp: “Let me ... be clear that the situation in Gaza must change. Humanitarian goods and people must flow in both directions; Gaza cannot and must not be allowed to remain a prison camp.”³ It is high time that, after the recent armed confrontation, which was again characterized by a totally disproportionate use of force, the provisions of the “Understanding regarding [a] ceasefire in [the] Gaza Strip”, sponsored by Egypt,⁴ be implemented in their entirety, and that the siege be lifted without any further delay.

The turmoil and uprisings in the region must not be misread. The old colonial – or imperial – tactics of *divide et impera* (divide and rule), practised since the end of the First World War, will not be effective on the core issue of the Middle East conflict in the long term. The peoples in the Arab world and the wider Middle East, though undergoing a process of profound change in terms of their political aspirations and identity, will not be misled about the causes of the suffering of their brethren in Palestine, or eventually simply forget about it because of their preoccupation with domestic affairs. Trying to buy time, and delaying a just and permanent solution of the Palestinian issue indefinitely, is a dangerous gamble under the circumstances of geopolitical transformation in the entire region.

Let us hope that events at United Nations Headquarters in New York, which, later today, will document the support of a large majority of the international community for a sovereign Palestinian State, will also convince the occupying Power and its allies to reverse course and seek a permanent settlement of the dispute on the basis of justice and mutual respect. Only a policy inspired by these principles will ensure security and sustainable peace in the interest of all peoples in the region.

Mennonite Central Committee (New York)

[Original: English]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Mennonite Central Committee reaffirms its commitment to peace, justice and human rights for Palestinians and their neighbours. We do so while mourning the recent escalation of violence in Gaza, the victims of which, both Palestinian and Israeli, bear solemn testimony to the wide disparity of power between these peoples. Thus, as we condemn all forms of violence, we call for the dismantling of systems and structures that perpetuate oppression by maintaining power and privilege for some at the expense of others.

³ Speech delivered in Ankara, quoted in “Britain: calling Gaza a ‘prison camp’, Cameron condemns Israeli blockade”, *New York Times*, 28 July 2010.

⁴ According to point 1 (c) of the agreement, the text of which was distributed at a news conference in Cairo on 21 November with the Secretary of State of the United States and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, the opening of the Gaza border crossings should have been dealt with “after 24 hours from the start of the ceasefire”.

As a Christian organization, we make this statement in light of our allegiance to Jesus Christ, who taught us to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9), condemned the futility of violence (Matthew 26:52), and offered a vision of liberation and justice for all peoples (Luke 4:18-19).

Lamentably, the latest violence between Israelis and Palestinians is but one episode in a wider conflict, the root causes of which must be addressed in order to secure a just and lasting peace. Informed and challenged by both our Palestinian and Israeli partners, whose very lives are at stake in this conflict, we call for a just resolution based on the following principles:

- A commitment to respect human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international covenants and conventions
- An end to the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as called for by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)
- A shared Jerusalem in which the spiritual significance of the city for Christians, Muslims and Jews would be recognized; Jews, Christians and Muslims should all be able to worship and practise their faiths freely and securely in the land
- An end to discriminatory confiscation and distribution of land and water resources, including those practices prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention, and, in accordance with the ruling of the International Court of Justice, the dismantling of the illegal separation wall
- Justice and security for Palestinian refugees, as called for by General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

We acknowledge that we do not approach these issues as unconnected outsiders, but with full recognition of our own national Governments' roles in either perpetuating or helping to resolve this conflict. We lament and repent of our complicity in the injustices that have taken place, whether through military aid or unjust economic structures. The Mennonite Central Committee remains committed to advocating for a just peace to our elected officials in Government, as well as at the grass roots in our communities and churches.

As members of a global Church, we humbly seek to live out our faith while respecting our global neighbours of different faiths. Moreover, we seek to be in solidarity with the unique struggle of our Palestinian Christian sisters and brothers and to listen to their voices, in particular as expressed through the Kairos Palestine document (www.kairospalestine.ps), which declares this prophetic hope:

“In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God's goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land. We will see here 'a new land' and 'a new human being', capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters.”

Finally, we pray that the God of mercy, compassion, justice and truth would move in the hearts and minds of the powerful and the powerless to move us toward a better future for all.

NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine (New York)

[Original: English]

The NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine at the United Nations extends its warmest greetings on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Working Group is a coalition of diverse organizations that have met since 1999 to share information and advocate for a just peace between Israel and Palestine.

The Working Group maintains that a just settlement of the conflict between Israel and Palestine would be in accord with all international, humanitarian and human rights laws and agreements. The Working Group supports the centrality of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 446 (1979). Accordingly, the Working Group understands that a just settlement would include, but not be limited to, the following principles:

- Uphold the rights of all civilians to feel secure within their own borders
- End the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza
- Uphold the rights of refugees and displaced persons
- Reaffirm East Jerusalem as part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- Reaffirm the application of international law to Israel and Palestine.

The Working Group supports the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination. We recognize the draft resolution for an upgrade in Palestine's status to observer State as an expression of that self-determination.

The Working Group supports a non-violent resolution of the conflict and sees violence as an impediment to peace. It recognizes the ongoing responsibility of all actors, including international third party actors, to contribute to the resolution of the conflict.

The Working Group maintains that a just and lasting peace will occur when all people's inalienable human rights will be protected, their security ensured and the demands of justice will be fairly and impartially respected in conformity with international law.

To this end, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we affirm our deep commitment to the Palestinian people and to all persons of good will in the region, looking forward to a time when the rights of all are recognized and all will be able to live in harmony and peace.

NGO Working Group on Peace (Geneva)

[Original: English]

The NGO Working Group on Peace, which includes the World Young Women's Christian Association, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the General Arab Women Federation, again this year joins women and men all over the world in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. As organizations that have a long history of working on issues of peace with justice, we have witnessed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since

1948 and journeyed in solidarity with the people in this region. We stand in search of lasting and durable peace with justice for all people of the world, and especially in this region on this special day, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We share this statement with deep pain, anger and disbelief at the violence we have just witnessed this very same month in Gaza, and the impacts on civilians, especially women and children, in Palestine and the whole region.

We know that only by addressing the fundamental cause of this conflict, that is, the occupation by Israel, can genuine peace be achieved. The day the Israeli occupation of Palestine ends will be the dawn of real peace. It is a contradiction to expect people to live in peace and with freedom curtailed by the walls of occupation, with no real rights of citizenship and no real status under international law. There can be no lasting peace until Israel is held accountable for its continued breaches of United Nations resolutions and international rulings, and until the international community demands that both sides are equally accountable for upholding the law. Like others, we welcome the ceasefire just agreed, but we know the limitations of a ceasefire; it is but a temporary measure.

We ask for real accountability of all parties involved in this crisis. The governing authorities on both sides, especially the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and other institutions owe it to their citizens, their children and their own future to break this impasse. There are numerous United Nations resolutions on this issue, but their implementation is lacking. It is urgent to have peace with justice, based on granting the Palestinian people their inalienable right of return, the right to statehood and the full rights and obligations under international law which statehood confers.

Since the adoption in 1977 of 29 November as the annual observance of this Day of Solidarity, we have stood solid and expressed our quest for peace, justice and protection of human rights and dignity. We affirm the principles and commitments on the role of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding as enshrined in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

On this special day we make this call on:

(a) The United Nations, through the Security Council and the General Assembly and its other mechanisms, the United States of America and the Arab League to demonstrate the courage to take measures to end occupation, as a means for creating real peace with justice and building a secure region in which women, men and their families can enjoy their freedoms and human rights;

(b) The Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the international community to take meaningful and profound steps towards ending occupation and to implement the agreed upon United Nations resolutions, most importantly General Assembly resolutions 181 (III), 194 (III), 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as the basis for building Peace with Justice in the region;

(c) The international community to remain in solidarity with the people of Palestine and provide the necessary humanitarian support to the victims of violence, and ensure continued efforts to secure lasting peace;

(d) The women and men of the world to demand implementation of international human rights laws and United Nations resolutions, actions towards just peace and accountability for the commitments already made on Palestine, as a practical measure of solidarity.
