

*Permanent Observer Mission  
of Palestine  
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة  
لفلسطين  
لدى الأمم المتحدة

(Check against Delivery)

*Statement by*

*H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas  
President of the State of Palestine  
Chairman of the Executive Committee of  
the Palestine Liberation Organization  
President of the Palestinian National Authority*

*before  
United Nations General Assembly  
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*on agenda item #37: Question of Palestine*

*New York  
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Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Palestine comes today to the United Nations General Assembly at a time when it is still tending to its wounds and still burying its beloved martyrs of children, women and men who have fallen victim to the latest Israeli aggression, still searching for remnants of life amid the ruins of homes destroyed by Israeli bombs on the Gaza Strip, wiping out entire families, their men, women and children murdered along with their dreams, their hopes, their future and their longing to live an ordinary life and to live in freedom and peace.

Palestine comes today to the General Assembly because it believes in peace and because its people, as proven in past days, are in desperate need of it.

Palestine comes today to this prestigious international forum, representative and protector of international legitimacy, reaffirming our conviction that the international community now stands before the last chance to save the two-State solution.

Palestine comes to you today at a defining moment regionally and internationally, in order to reaffirm its presence and to try to protect the possibilities and the foundations of a just peace that is deeply hoped for in our region.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Israeli aggression against our people in the Gaza Strip has confirmed once again the urgent and pressing need to end the Israeli occupation and for our people to gain their freedom and independence. This aggression also confirms the Israeli Government's adherence to the policy of occupation, brute force and war, which in turn obliges the international community to shoulder its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people and towards peace.

This is why we are here today.

I say with great pain and sorrow... there was certainly no one in the world that required that tens of Palestinian children lose their lives in order to reaffirm the above-mentioned facts. There was no need for thousands of deadly raids and tons of explosives for the world to be reminded that there is an occupation that must come to an end and that there are a people that must be liberated. And, there was no need for a new, devastating war in order for us to be aware of the absence of peace.

This is why we are here today.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Palestinian people, who miraculously recovered from the ashes of Al-Nakba of 1948, which was intended to extinguish their being and to expel them in order to uproot and erase their presence, which was rooted in the depths of their land and depths of history. In those dark days, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were torn from their homes and displaced within and outside of their homeland, thrown from their beautiful, embracing, prosperous country to refugee camps in one of the most dreadful campaigns of ethnic cleansing and dispossession in modern history. In those dark days, our people had looked to the United Nations as a beacon of hope and appealed for ending the injustice and for achieving justice and peace, the realization of our rights, and our people still believe in this and continue to wait.

This is why we are here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the course of our long national struggle, our people have always strived to ensure harmony and conformity between the goals and means of their struggle and international law and spirit of the era in accordance with prevailing realities and changes. And, our people always have strived not to lose their humanity, their highest, deeply-held moral values and their innovative abilities for survival, steadfastness, creativity and hope, despite the horrors that befell them and continue befall them today as a consequence of Al-Nakba and its horrors.

Despite the enormity and weight of this task, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the constant leader of their revolution and struggle, has consistently strived to achieve this harmony and conformity.

When the Palestine National Council decided in 1988 to pursue the Palestinian peace initiative and adopted the Declaration of Independence, which was based on resolution 181 (II) (29 November 1947), adopted by your august body, it was in fact undertaking, under the leadership of the late President Yasser Arafat, a historic, difficult and courageous decision that defined the requirements for a historic reconciliation that would turn the page on war, aggression and occupation.

This was not an easy matter. Yet, we had the courage and sense of high responsibility to make the right decision to protect the higher national interests of our people and to confirm our adherence to international legitimacy, and it was a decision which in that same year was welcomed, supported and blessed by this high body that is meeting today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have heard and you too have heard specifically over the past months the incessant flood of Israeli threats in response to our peaceful, political and diplomatic endeavor for Palestine to acquire non-member observer State in the United Nations. And, you have surely

witnessed how some of these threats have been carried out in a barbaric and horrific manner just days ago in the Gaza Strip.

We have not heard one word from any Israeli official expressing any sincere concern to save the peace process. On the contrary, our people have witnessed, and continue to witness, an unprecedented intensification of military assaults, the blockade, settlement activities and ethnic cleansing, particularly in Occupied East Jerusalem, and mass arrests, attacks by settlers and other practices by which this Israeli occupation is becoming synonymous with an apartheid system of colonial occupation, which institutionalizes the plague of racism and entrenches hatred and incitement.

What permits the Israeli Government to blatantly continue with its aggressive policies and the perpetration of war crimes stems from its conviction that it is above the law and that it has immunity from accountability and consequences. This belief is bolstered by the failure by some to condemn and demand the cessation of its violations and crimes and by position that equate the victim and the executioner.

The moment has arrived for the world to say clearly: Enough of aggression, settlements and occupation.

This is why we are here now.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We did not come here seeking to delegitimize a State established years ago, and that is Israel; rather we came to affirm the legitimacy of the State that must now achieve its independence, and that is Palestine. We did not come here to add further complications to the peace process, which Israel's policies have thrown into the intensive care unit; rather we came to launch a final serious attempt to achieve peace. Our endeavor is not aimed at terminating what remains of the negotiations process, which has lost its objective and credibility, but rather aimed at trying to breathe new life into the negotiations and at setting a solid foundation for it based on the terms of reference of the relevant international resolutions in order for the negotiations to succeed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization, I say: We will not give up, we will not tire, and our determination will not wane and we will continue to strive to achieve a just peace.

However, above all and after all, I affirm that our people will not relinquish their inalienable national rights, as defined by United Nations resolutions. And our people cling to the right to defend themselves against aggression and occupation and they will continue their popular, peaceful resistance and their epic steadfastness and will continue to build on their land. And, they will end the division and strengthen their national unity. We will accept no less than the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on all the

Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, to live in peace and security alongside the State of Israel, and a solution for the refugee issue on the basis of resolution 194 (III), as per the operative part of the Arab Peace Initiative.

Yet, we must repeat here once again our warning: the window of opportunity is narrowing and time is quickly running out. The rope of patience is shortening and hope is withering. The innocent lives that have been taken by Israeli bombs - more than 168 martyrs, mostly children and women, including 12 members of one family, the Dalou family, in Gaza - are a painful reminder to the world that this racist, colonial occupation is making the two-State solution and the prospect for realizing peace a very difficult choice, if not impossible.

It is time for action and the moment to move forward.

This is why we are here today.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentleman,

The world is being asked today to undertake a significant step in the process of rectifying the unprecedented historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people since Al-Nakba of 1948.

Every voice supporting our endeavor today is a most valuable voice of courage, and every State that grants support today to Palestine's request for non-member observer State status is affirming its principled and moral support for freedom and the rights of peoples and international law and peace.

Your support for our endeavor today will send a promising message - to millions of Palestinians on the land of Palestine, in the refugee camps both in the homeland and the Diaspora, and to the prisoners struggling for freedom in Israel's prisons - that justice is possible and that there is a reason to be hopeful and that the peoples of the world do not accept the continuation of the occupation.

This is why we are here today.

Your support for our endeavor today will give a reason for hope to a people besieged by a racist, colonial occupation. Your support will confirm to our people that they are not alone and their adherence to international law is never going to be a losing proposition.

In our endeavor today to acquire non-member State status for Palestine in the United Nations, we reaffirm that Palestine will always adhere to and respect the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations and international humanitarian law, uphold equality, guarantee civil liberties, uphold the rule of law, promote democracy and pluralism, and uphold and protect the rights of women.

As we promised our friends and our brothers and sisters, we will continue to consult with them upon the approval of your esteemed body our request to upgrade Palestine's status. We

will act responsibly and positively in our next steps, and we will to work to strengthen cooperation with the countries and peoples of the world for the sake of a just peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty-five years ago on this day, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), which partitioned the land of historic Palestine into two States and became the birth certificate for Israel.

Sixty-five years later and on the same day, which your esteemed body has designated as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the General Assembly stands before a moral duty, which it must not hesitate to undertake, and stands before a historic duty, which cannot endure further delay, and before a practical duty to salvage the chances for peace, which is urgent and cannot be postponed.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The General Assembly is called upon today to issue a birth certificate of the reality of the State of Palestine.

This is why in specific we are here today.

Thank you.