

**Unofficial English Translation**

**Message of**

**H. E. President Mahmoud Abbas**

**President of the State of Palestine**

**On the Occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

**29 November 2023**

Her Excellency Madame the Director General

Representative of the Committee on the Exercise of Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,

Representative of the United Nations Special Committee,

Representatives of the Geographical and political groups, and of non-governmental institutions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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In this most difficult time that the Palestinian cause is going through, and in these darkest of times, the light of hope shines from the principled positions of the peoples, who have risen up in all corners of the globe to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people, their struggle and their legitimate rights to freedom, independence and return, and to condemn the aggression, the war, the killing, the destruction, the displacement. They have risen to stand by the right side of history.

Today, in my name, and on behalf of the Palestinian people, I extend my gratitude and appreciation to these peoples and to their leaders, who echoed the voices and positions of their peoples, and to all those who believe in the justness of the Palestinian cause and in the inalienable rights of our people to life, to freedom and to self-determination. I also extend thanks to all the countries, organizations, and peoples who are providing humanitarian assistance and relief aid to our people. We say to you: we will never forget this generosity and these noble gestures. We have been inspired by your sincere dedication, your humanity, and your principled positions in support of fundamental rights and international law and in rejection of occupation, aggression and apartheid.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People comes at a time that our people in the Gaza Strip are facing an existential threat and the deliberate and systematic targeting of civilians. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, the Israeli occupying forces have committed horrific international crimes, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. They have

launched a barbaric aggression, a despicable war of vengeance, and crimes of genocide. They are targeting innocent people. The victims of this Israeli aggression have reached more than 60,000 Palestinians killed and injured, thus far, 70% of whom are children, women and elderly persons, in addition to thousands of victims who remain under the rubble. Entire families have been exterminated, and more than 1.7 million Palestinians have been displaced, in a blatant attempt to impose a new Nakba.

Tens of thousands of homes, buildings, facilities, shelter centers and infrastructure have been destroyed, on top of the heads of their residents, by the Israeli war machine. This war is an extension of the constant aggressions of this repugnant occupation against our people in attempt to perpetuate and entrench its colonization and occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine, including Jerusalem. But, we should all know by now, peace and security can never be achieved by stripping Palestinians of their humanity, or by demonizing them, nor by crushing the skulls of infants, or shedding the blood of children, or by “wiping out Gaza” or “turning it into hell” or “reducing its area”, nor by cutting off its water, electricity, and fuel, leaving 2.3 million Palestinians besieged and starved, preventing the entry of their minimum humanitarian, relief, medical, and food needs.

In the West Bank, including Jerusalem, our people are also facing widespread and dangerous attacks, by the Israeli occupying forces, who press on with the aim of seizing the land and wealth of our people. We therefore reiterate our calls on the international community, and all international organizations, to stop the settlements and the silent annexation, to stop the daily practices of ethnic cleansing and racial discrimination in all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We call on them to stop the attacks on our people in Jerusalem, Christians and Muslims, to stop the attacks on the holy sites, to prevent incursions into the sacred Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as the attempts to alter the legal and historical status quo in the Holy City. We call on them to stop the invasions of cities, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, assaults on prisoners, withholding the bodies of martyrs, and stealing the money and resources of the Palestinian people. We call on them to stop the crimes of terrorist settler militias supported by the occupying army, and other systematic and widespread crimes, and to stop arming thousands of terrorist colonial settlers enabling their continued terrorism and attacks on our people in Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The main cause of the dangerous escalation in the region is the absence and neglect of rights. The world cannot stand by and watch what Israel is committing in the form of every kind of killing and destruction, arrests and displacement, against the Palestinian people. The world must not tolerate its crimes and fail to hold it accountable. It must seek a comprehensive solution that addresses the root causes of this occupation and its existence on the territory of the State of Palestine. Ending the occupation and realizing the rights of the Palestinian people is the only way to maintain regional and international stability, peace and security.

What is required urgently now is an immediate halt of the Israeli aggression, a cessation of fire against our people in the Gaza Strip, as well as urgent efforts to secure the entry of humanitarian aid and to reject and prevent their forced displacement, as well as to provide urgent international protection for the Palestinian people, and to realize justice through accountability, in addition to rejection of division of the Gaza Strip, or reduction of its area, or the redeployment of the occupying soldiers inside the Gaza Strip.

It is crucial to take strategic steps to address the strategic threat to the two-State solution, to take practical steps to address the root cause of the problem, and the reasons behind the absence of security and the instability in the Middle East. It is crucial to take practical steps to end the Israeli colonial occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the peace process and international law, and for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, at the forefront of which is the right to self-determination, to national independence, and to the return of Palestine refugees to their homes from which they were displaced, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (II).

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have warned over the past 75 years that ignoring the rights of the Palestinian people and their suffering, ignoring international law, and failing to take steps to hold Israel accountable, treating it as a State above all international norms and laws, and justifying its crimes under various pretexts, have contributed to prolonging Israeli colonialism and allowed Israel to take humanity hostage to its brutality, which undermines the international multilateral law-based system.

Some have gone so far as to be complicit in the crime of genocide, the crimes of the occupation and its terrorism, granting it immunity from accountability and punishment, as well as giving an absolute authorization to kill and unleash aggression against our people, while supplying them with weapons, encouraging them in their recent war on Gaza, and even sending military reinforcements to engage directly in hostilities against our people, and rejecting the calls for a ceasefire, in a direct justification for murder.

The war of genocide carried out by the Israeli occupying war machine is not self-defense, and here we must remind, that whoever commits the crime of aggression and occupation of the land of others cannot claim the right to self-defense. Nothing can justify the killing of innocent civilians and children, the targeting of civilian objects, including hospitals, schools, United Nations shelters and facilities, nor can justify the use of starvation as a weapon of war, nor cutting off water and medical supplies from innocent civilians.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has led the Palestinian national struggle in order to realize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It has rejected schemes to liquidate the Palestinian cause and rejected piecemeal solutions. It has also preserved the independent national decision and the absolute sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their territory, and stressed that there is no state alone in Gaza, and no state without Gaza, and that Gaza, like Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, is an essential and indivisible part of the State of Palestine.

We will preserve the rights of our people, confront the aggression and occupation and resist it through political and legal means and through peaceful popular resistance. Our people will not submit to colonialism and apartheid. A people like ours, who are steadfast, supported and armed with unparalleled international solidarity, will not accept apartheid, Bantustans, ethnic cleansing, siege, and hatred; they will not accept the dismissal of their rights.

The time has come to achieve the international community's vision for stability and peace in the region, which is based on ending the occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy of this organization, and the terms of reference and foundations for the solution based on clear implementation mechanisms, and within a defined timeframe, including as stated in Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016). States and third parties must assume their responsibilities by not recognizing illegal acts, and not granting them any form of support, and by ensuring respect for international law. They must provide international protection for our defenseless people, and enable our people to exercise their right to self-determination and gain their freedom and independence on their territory, as well as achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. In this regard, we urge that the State of Palestine be enabled to obtain its full membership in the United Nations by a Security Council resolution, as a first step, and that States that wish to preserve the two-State solution recognize the State of Palestine now. They must support peace, reject aggression and war, and maintain the hope.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are convinced, now more than ever, that the time has come to hold an international peace conference, and uphold the international will. The time has come to reject Israel's intransigence in opposing this vision and recognition the right of the Palestinian people to exist and to self-determination. We are ready to work with the international community to achieve this immediately. The current aggression against our Palestinian people must also stop immediately. We must engage in a serious political process that adheres to international legitimacy and aims to end the occupation, a process that defines a package of guarantees to implement what is agreed upon within a specific period of time, to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that leads to the Palestinian people's liberation, their freedom and independence in the State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of refugees to return to their homes from which they were displaced, in accordance with resolution 194, and the implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative.

The current Israeli aggression places us at a crossroad, in which either the international will prevails or the occupation's will to perpetuate its colonialism and its vision of an unstable and fiery Middle East, with settlement policies and settler terrorism, incursions in the City of Jerusalem and violation of sanctities that will transform the conflict from a political conflict into a religious war that will have dire consequences.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

We will spare no effort to protect our people and search for all means to avoid the scourge of war, killing and destruction, and to preserve the unity of our people and the unity of their destiny in their homeland, Palestine, so that they exercise their fundamental rights and their highest right all, the right to life. We express our commitments to international law and its institutions, and to the institutions of international justice, as well as their duties to preserve accountability and prosecute the crimes of the occupation that violate international law and international humanitarian law, as a basis for bringing peace and justice to the victims of the Palestinian people, as well as Israel's obligations as an occupying Power to assume its

responsibilities for all it has destroyed, and to make reparation for its crimes in Gaza and the West Bank, including Jerusalem.

Excellencies, dear friends,

Palestine was, and still is, the true test of the effectiveness and sustainability of the international law-based system, and no amount of false claims and voices that equate the victim with the executioner, the occupier with the occupied, can thwart this truth. The failure to engage or ignore the root causes from which the Palestinian cause was born is a failure of this system and its longevity. This is proven, not least, by the peoples and the free voices of solidarity who have come out in the millions in the world's capitals to stand with Palestinian rights and the legendary steadfastness of our people and to stand with the respect for the principles of international law and the necessity of applying them, without double standards or selectivity.

Our Palestinian people, along with all those in solidarity with them, in the world, will not accept oppression and injustice, and will not accept anything less than to live in freedom and dignity in a free and gracious homeland. They have the right to defend themselves, their existence, and their national rights. Allow me to also say that all of you have the obligation to help the Palestinian people to achieve their freedom and independence and to live in peace and security, just like the rest of the peoples of the world. There is no force on earth that will prevent them from achieving this goal.

Finally, I wish to salute the resilience of our Palestinian people in Palestine and in the refugee camps and the diaspora, and with pride, I also salute our brave martyrs, prisoners and wounded people, and tell them all: our one goal is to end the occupation and achieve freedom and independence. Once again, I affirm: this occupation will end and the Palestinian right will prevail, sooner or later.

Peace be upon you.