



**United Nations
Secretary-General**

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Secretary-General's Remarks to Opening of the 2016 Session of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election. As crises continue to engulf the Middle East, this Committee is critical to keeping the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in the international spotlight.

As we meet, violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory continues unabated.

Yesterday, I addressed the Security Council on the issue.

I strongly condemned the stabbings, vehicle attacks, and shootings by Palestinians targeting Israeli civilians.

I expressed concerns about clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces that continue to claim lives.

I repeated the firm position of the United Nations that settlements are illegal under international law and threaten to destroy the two-state solution.

I urged Israel to take action consistent with prior agreements, particularly in Area C, to improve Palestinian lives, empower Palestinian institutions and enhance stability and security for Israelis and Palestinians.

I underscored the need for the Palestinian leadership to stand against incitement, improve governance and reunite Gaza and the West Bank under a single legitimate Palestinian Authority.

All of these points need to be said and they need to be repeated.

And yet, I can understand why Palestinians living the reality on the ground may dismiss it. Because they have heard so much of it before.

After nearly 50 years of occupation – after decades of waiting for the fulfilment of the Oslo promises – Palestinians are losing hope.

Young people especially are losing hope.

They are angered by the stifling policies of the occupation.

They are frustrated by the strictures on their daily lives.

They watch as Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, expand and expand.

They are losing faith in their own leadership to deliver genuine national reconciliation and see the dream of a sovereign, contiguous and independent Palestinian state slip away.

The people of Palestine have lived through half a century of occupation, and they have heard half a century of statements condemning it. But life hasn't meaningfully changed.

Children have become grandparents. But life hasn't changed.

We issue statements. We express concern. We voice solidarity. But life hasn't changed.

And some Palestinians wonder: Is this all meant to simply run out the clock?

They ask: Are we meant to watch as the world endlessly debates how to divide land while it disappears before our very eyes?

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me be clear. Nothing excuses terror. Nothing justifies the targeting of innocent people. I condemn all such acts categorically.

If we hope to see an end to this violence, security measures will not be enough – we must address the underlying frustration and failure to achieve a political solution.

The United Nations is committed to working to create the conditions for the parties to return to meaningful negotiations.

That is the one and only path to a just and lasting solution – an end to the occupation that began in 1967, leading to a sovereign and independent State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel.

Of course, Israelis and Palestinians have a profound stake in achieving this peace. We all do.

Securing a lasting peace will mean so much to so many.

You can count on me to continue to speak up and speak out – to push and to prod – to do all in my power to achieve long-overdue Israeli-Palestinian peace.

And I will count on this Committee to take constructive and meaningful action to bring Israelis and Palestinians together to meet our shared goal.

Thank you.