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## **At Palestinian Flag-Raising Ceremony, Secretary-General Says Now Is Time for 'the Realization of Two States for Two Peoples'**

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at the Palestinian flag-raising ceremony, in New York today:

This is a day of pride for Palestinians around the world. It is a day of hope. It is reminder that symbols are important — and that a symbol can lead to action in the right direction.

The symbolism of raising your flag at the United Nations reflects the commitment of the Palestinian Authority to pursue the long-held dream of the Palestinian people for their own State. It also symbolizes the long-standing commitment of the United Nations to support Palestinian aspirations.

We can be under no illusion that this ceremony represents the end goal. Achieving Palestinian Statehood requires decisive action to advance national unity. The first step is ensuring that the West Bank and Gaza are integrated under a single authority.

Now is the time to support initiatives which will preserve the two-State solution and create the conditions for a return to meaningful negotiations on the basis of an agreed framework.

Now is the time to restore confidence by both Israelis and Palestinians for a peaceful settlement, and at last, the realization of two States for two peoples.

I sincerely hope that a successful peace process will soon yield a day when we unfurl the Palestinian flag in its proper place — among the family of nations as a sovereign Member State of the United Nations.

May the raising of this flag give rise to the hope among the Palestinian people and the international community that Palestinian statehood is achievable. Let us continue to work together to realize the aspirations that this flag carries; Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. *Mabrouk. Thank you. Shukran jazeelan.*

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