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REMARKS TO THE 7th CONGRESS OF FATAH**

RAMALLAH, 29 NOVEMBER 2016

(AS DELIVERED)

Mr President, Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here with you today on behalf of the Secretary-General on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

It is an honour to address the 7th Congress of Fatah – which is the soul of the Palestinian people, just as the Palestinian people are the soul of the Arab nation.

Dear delegates,

Today, you make history.

A strong, democratic and inclusive Fatah is the best guarantee for the realization of the national aspirations of the Palestinian people, for the fulfilment of their inalienable rights of self-determination, statehood, dignity and freedom.

Your movement has turned a people of refugees into a nation seeking freedom and statehood.

I am confident that all in Fatah understand the historic responsibility that your movement has for the Palestinian national cause.

For generations of Palestinians from Gaza to the West Bank, from East Jerusalem to the refugee camps in the region your movement has stood for freedom. We, your friends, all confident that all of you here today and those beyond the confines of this great hall will seize the opportunity to promote unity, to strengthen the mainstream centre of Palestinian politics and to stand against the rising tide of extremism and radicalism across the region.

Fatah is the *um al jamaheer* for all Palestinians.

Fatah is Palestine's democracy.

Preserve this democracy. Protect the dream of Palestinian statehood. Stand against violence. Work for peace.

And never give up! Never give up!

Never give up until the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. A state that lives in peace, in security and mutual recognition with Israel.

In the last 30 years, Abu Ammar and the Palestinian leadership have accepted key UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Your leadership has renounced terror, it has supported the principle of two states and has declared the state of Palestine.

Since then, under the leadership of President Abbas, we have witnessed the building of national institutions, we have seen the upgrading of the status of Palestine in the United Nations, and last year we saw the Palestinian flag raised at the United Nations.

Your Excellency President Abbas,

Thank you for your leadership, for your unfailing commitment to the statehood of Palestine, for your belief in peace and non-violence.

Today, sadly, the Israeli occupation continues. Illegal settlement expansion, violence, terror and divisions are threatening the bold vision of a just peace. Today, the prospect of two-states is slipping through our fingers to be replaced by a one-state reality.

Let me speak to those who think that today's status quo is acceptable. To those who criticise the two-state solution or call for annexation.

Let me make it very clear — they are wrong.

They advocate for an open-ended occupation. An endless conflict that breeds anger among the people of Palestine just as it breeds anger among the people of Israel. It feeds radicalism across the region.

These people offer no alternative. They give no hope, and we need to stand up to them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fatah has a role in advancing the vision of Palestine through bold leadership, through negotiations and through non-violent resistance.

I wish you success. Success in electing a leadership that will wisely guide you through the challenging environment. A leadership that will work to end the occupation. That will bring about national unity. That will have the strength and the honour and the dignity to negotiate with Israel on an equal footing and that will, *inshallah*, deliver a peace treaty that brings about freedom and independence to Palestine.

The United Nations will continue to stand side-by-side with the Palestinian people and all those who work for peace and a just and fair resolution to this conflict.

I wish you success.

I wish Palestine success.

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