

ROBERT H SERRY
UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
TO THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

REMARKS AT UN DAY EVENT
Turmus'ayya, Occupied Palestinian Territory
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Good afternoon everyone. We mark UN day every year. This year, we are doing it differently. We decided to abandon the formal diplomatic reception and, as a UN family, pick olives and share a meal with the people and farmers of Turmus'ayya, and with their leaders. Mayor Abu-Tayseer, thank you for welcoming us to your beautiful village lands. And Prime Minister Fayyad, thank you for honouring the United Nations with your presence.

There could be nothing more symbolic here in Palestine than to participate in the olive harvest. The harvest is an act of identity and of self-reliance. It is a symbol of a people's unyielding attachment to their homeland. This ancient and beautiful tree and its fruit bring together so much of the hope and resolve of the Palestinian people. The olive is a giver of life, the olive branch is an emblem of peace, and the olive tree is a symbol of Palestine.

By spending some hours picking olives with you, we are trying in a very small way to say: "Thank you for your continuing welcome to the UN among you. You have our deep admiration and respect. We are by your side in your daily toil. And we are determined to help you see your day's work through to its end: a Palestinian State that embodies genuine freedom and a bright future for all Palestinians, living at peace with Israel."

Even though it is our task to help you, we often find ourselves taking strength from you. PM Fayyad, may I say that the Secretary-General and I and the entire UN family deeply admires your determination, and that of President Abbas, to take the destiny of Palestine into your own hands -- despite occupation, despite division, despite the hard realities of daily life. Your actions and inspiration are sending a powerful message, and it being heard loud and clear around the world. Palestinian statehood is not only a right, and in everyone's interest: it is also doable. All international players are now in agreement that the Palestinians are ready for statehood at any point in the near future. We are in the homestretch of your agenda to reach that point, by August next year, and you have our full support.

The urgency of ending the occupation and establishing the state is plain from the ugly facts apparent here in Turmus'ayya. In recent weeks in this village alone, settler extremists have destroyed hundreds of trees by poison or by knocking them down. The same story can be told by villagers in many other places. I am appalled at acts of destruction of olive trees and farmlands, desecration of mosques, and violence against civilians. I condemn these actions.

Israel, as an occupying power, must prevent such violence against the Palestinian population, and bring those responsible to justice. Israel states its condemnation of attacks, and I welcome this. But its record in imposing the rule of law on settlers is lamentable. Israel must combat violence and terror by Israelis, as is expected of the Palestinian Authority in the case of violence and terror by Palestinians. I have also made clear my alarm that, since the expiry of Israel's settlement restraint, hundreds of new housing units have been started throughout the West Bank. This building is illegal under international law, and will only serve to undermine our efforts for a negotiated solution.

Allow me also to thank the Prime Minister for his tireless efforts on Gaza. Through a collective effort of many players, with the Palestinian Authority as our partner, we have made some modest progress in recent months, restarting some UN projects, and seeing an easing of the blockade. You recently managed to help alleviate the electricity crisis there, Prime Minister. But we have a long way to go if the blockade is to end, exports are to start, people are able to move, and links with the West Bank are to be restored.

The United Nations represents the hope of international law, but also embodies its shortcomings. The United Nations has passed many resolutions, including Security Council resolutions, which remain unimplemented. They must be implemented. This requires the parties to live up to their responsibilities, and the international community to live up to its responsibilities too.

In this spirit, we are working tirelessly to overcome the current impasse in negotiations. But I also pledge that the United Nations will work to ensure that any negotiations follow the proper path to the right goals: A resolution of all final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, refugees, security, settlements, and water. End of occupation. End of conflict. Security and freedom for both peoples. A two state solution. All members of the Quartet share these goals and want to see them implemented -- next year.

Let me now read to you the global message of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to all ceremonies around the world where UN day is being celebrated:

On United Nations Day, I express my great appreciation to the millions of people throughout the world who believe deeply in our work for peace, development and human rights... and who uphold our ideals and help us achieve our goals. To all of you... friends and fellow citizens of the world... I say: thank you.

Sixty-five years ago on this date, the founding Charter of the United Nations entered into force. Every year on UN Day, we reaffirm our global mission. We reassert the universal values of tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity. And we recognize the progress we have made together: gains in literacy and life expectancy... the spread of knowledge and technology... advances in democracy and the rule of law.

But above all, UN Day is a day on which we resolve to do more. More to protect those caught up in armed conflict, to fight climate change and avert nuclear catastrophe; more to expand opportunities for women and girls, and to combat injustice and impunity; more to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Last month's MDG Summit at the United Nations generated political momentum... as well as financial commitments that are especially significant in these difficult economic times. I am determined to press ahead as the 2015 deadline approaches.

Despite our problems, despite polarization and distrust, our interconnected world has opened up vast new possibilities for common progress. Let us commit to do even more to realize the great vision set out in the UN Charter.

This is the end of the Secretary-General's message. Now it is my pleasure to invite the Prime Minister to say a few words.