

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AT SECURITY COUNCIL
OPEN BRIEFING ON THE MIDDLE EAST**

New York, 11 February 2020

[as delivered]

Excellences,
Monsieur le Ministre Philippe Goffin, Président du Conseil de sécurité,

Excellencies,

Let me start by welcoming His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine and the members of his delegation.

I address you today with a deep sense of concern as we witness growing tensions and instability around the globe, particularly in the Middle East.

Tensions and risks in the Gulf have risen to troubling levels. And after seeing some promising developments last year, today we are witnessing dangerous re-escalations of the conflicts in Yemen, Syria, and even Libya.

This volatile context only underscores the need for a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has lasted for far too long, and which remains crucial to sustainable peace in the Middle East.

I reiterate my full personal commitment – and the commitment of the United Nations – to supporting the parties in their efforts to achieve a two-State solution.

As I stated recently, the position of the United Nations in this regard has been defined, throughout the years, by resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly, by which the Secretariat is bound.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant UN resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements and realizing the vision of two States – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines.

This is a time for dialogue, for reconciliation, for reason. I urge Israeli and Palestinian leaders to demonstrate the necessary will required to advance the goal of a just and lasting peace, which the international community must support.

Rest assured of the full commitment of the United Nations – to a just and comprehensive peace between Palestinians and Israelis based on our shared multilateral framework set by United Nations resolutions and international law.

Mr. President,

The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and my envoy, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, is here to brief the Council.

Thank you.