

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS AT SECURITY COUNCIL

New York, 20 February 2018

AS DELIVERED

President of the Security Council, Your Excellency Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, Permanent Representative of Kuwait,

Your Excellency, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine.

Welcome to you and your delegation,

Excellencies,

I have just returned from a visit to Kuwait.

Kuwait generously hosted a conference on the reconstruction of Iraq and helped mobilize critical resources.

The international community showed its gratitude to the Iraqi people for their courageous victory over Daesh.

The support is a vote of confidence in the government and people of Iraq.

Kuwait, Mr. President, has played a very important leadership role in this very successful meeting.

But, unfortunately, positive developments in Iraq are an exception in the region.

This context underscores the need for a political solution to the Israeli- Palestinian conflict which has lasted for far too long.

I am here to 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.

A solution of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders.

A solution that addresses all final status issues on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and mutual agreements.

There is no Plan B.

Yet, we must face today's sad reality.

After decades of support, the global consensus for a two-State solution could be eroding.

Obstacles on the ground have the potential to create an irreversible one-state reality.

It is simply impossible to square the circle of a one-state reality with the legitimate national, historic and democratic aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians.

At the same time, conditions for Palestinians in Gaza – which has been under the control of Hamas for a decade – are dire.

Shortfalls in UNRWA funding are a matter of international concern.

The human security, rights and dignity of five million Palestine refugees are at stake.

So, too, is the stability of the region.

I appeal to the international community to step up its generous support.

Excellencies,

This is a time for dialogue, for reconciliation, for reason.

At this moment of grave consequence, I appeal for effective concerted action by all parties. It is more important than ever.

Mr. President,

Allow me to ask you to give the floor to the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, to deliver his monthly briefing to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East.

Thank you.