

**The Secretary-General Remarks on the
International Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People
New York, 30 November 2009**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join you.

I commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for keeping the international community's focus on the question of Palestine.

The question is as fundamental today as it was sixty-two years ago, when the General Assembly, in resolution 181, put forth a vision of two States.

Today, the State of Israel exists, but the State of Palestine does not.

The Palestinian people continue to struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination -- a fundamental, universal human right enjoyed by so many others across the world.

The international community continues to assist and protect the Palestinian people, including through the work of UN agencies, UNRWA foremost among them.

However, our interventions must not be limited to managing the humanitarian dimension of this conflict.

What is urgently needed is a political solution that addresses the roots of the conflict.

It is vital that a sovereign State of Palestine is achieved.

This should be on the basis of the 1967 lines with agreed land swaps and a just and agreed solution to the refugee issue -- a state that lives side-by-side in peace with Israel within secure and recognized borders, as envisaged in the resolutions of the Security Council.

I welcome the commitment of Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to a two-State solution.

At the same time, I am deeply concerned that talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have been suspended for almost a year.

I support the clear commitment and continuing efforts of the United States to bring about a resumption of meaningful negotiations on all final status issues, including the security of Israelis and Palestinians, borders, refugees and Jerusalem.

The biggest challenge to this shared agenda is to create the conditions in which the parties have the trust and confidence to return to genuine and substantive talks.

On the Palestinian side, the Palestinian Authority has made significant progress in meeting its Roadmap obligations in the West Bank, and in building institutions to serve the Palestinian people.

I call on all Palestinians to fight violent extremism and to refrain from incitement, and to continue their unyielding struggle to build their own state institutions.

These efforts have resulted in economic and security improvements, which should be sustained and extended.

I welcome initial steps taken by Israel to contribute to these positive trends, and call on Israeli authorities to expand these measures so that change can become truly transformative.

I am deeply concerned that, in East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank, illegal settlement construction continues.

I have noted Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent announcement of settlement restraint.

While this is a step beyond earlier positions, it falls short of Israel's obligations under the Roadmap, particularly given the exclusion of East Jerusalem.

I repeat my call on Israel to meet in full its Roadmap commitments to freeze all settlement activity, including "natural growth", and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001.

In addition, the barrier continues to restrict Palestinian access to key social services, agricultural land and East Jerusalem.

As you will recall, the International Court of Justice has stated that the barrier's deviation from the 1967 line into occupied Palestinian territory is contrary to international law.

I am also concerned about the situation in Jerusalem.

Actions such as the evictions of Palestinians and house demolitions, as well as the continued closure of Palestinian institutions in occupied East Jerusalem, run contrary to Israel's Roadmap obligations.

I call on Israel to cease such actions in East Jerusalem, which stoke tensions, cause suffering and further undermine trust, and to reopen Palestinian institutions.

I reiterate my belief that Jerusalem remains a final status issue to be negotiated between the parties.

As the Quartet has previously stated, unilateral actions cannot prejudge the outcome of negotiations, and will not be recognized by the international community.

Jerusalem should emerge as the capital of two States, with arrangements for the holy sites acceptable to all.

We should all want to see Jerusalem as a symbol of harmony, tolerance and peace.

Il reste toujours nécessaire de trouver d'urgence une solution durable à la crise à Gaza.

L'arrivée de l'hiver et des intempéries suscite de profondes préoccupations concernant la situation humanitaire.

Le bouclage de Gaza devrait être levé, comme demandé par le Conseil de sécurité dans sa résolution 1860, afin de permettre à l'aide humanitaire et aux biens commerciaux d'entrer sans entrave et aux personnes de se déplacer librement.

Conformément à la même résolution, il faut également chercher à répondre aux préoccupations légitimes d'Israël en matière de sécurité, notamment en mettant en place des mécanismes visant à prévenir l'entrée en contrebande d'armes à Gaza et à mettre fin aux tirs de roquettes palestiniens dirigés contre des civils israéliens.

Dix mois après la fin des hostilités à Gaza et dans le sud d'Israël, la question de la responsabilité des nombreuses violations du droit international humanitaire et des droits de l'homme qui ont été signalées n'a toujours pas été résolue de manière satisfaisante.

Je demande à Israël et aux autorités palestiniennes compétentes d'engager, sans retard, des investigations crédibles au sujet des allégations de violations graves des droits de l'homme en rapport avec le conflit à Gaza.

La réunification de Gaza et de la Cisjordanie est également essentielle.

Il ne peut y avoir de solution à deux États sans un territoire palestinien unifié, et j'appuie les efforts de l'Égypte à cet égard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now more than ever, politics must be made credible.

Those who try to undermine moves toward peace through violence or by changing facts on the ground must not be allowed to set the agenda.

Vigorous international efforts are essential for advancing the political process, ending the occupation and achieving a solution to all permanent status issues.

The United Nations will continue to work for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515 and 1850, previous agreements, the Madrid framework, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

And I will continue to engage all concerned to realize our shared goal of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security.

Thank you.