

23 November 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,  
President of the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the Special Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the  
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to you all.

Let me begin by thanking the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for organizing this Special meeting.

I commend you also for the activities you have led this year to raise awareness of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the conditions endured by the Palestinian People.

Forty years ago, the General Assembly established this Committee.

It did so because by that time no progress had been achieved towards the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

Those rights include the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right to return to their homes from which they have been displaced.

Today, as we mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, many of those rights remain unfulfilled.

And key United Nations principles, namely the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war; equal rights and self-determination of peoples, continue to be violated.

In addition, the General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The General Assembly has also repeatedly affirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

I am therefore gravely concerned by the continuing expansion of settlements, the demolition of Palestinian homes, the revocation of residency rights and the eviction and displacement of numerous Palestinian families from East Jerusalem in contravention of international law.

Such actions do not contribute to peace. Rather they have become a major impediment and serve only to increase tension.

I am also deeply concerned by the severe humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, following the war in the summer of 2014.

Efforts to address the humanitarian situation, rebuild the homes and lives of thousands of residents affected by the 51 day war have been slow.

The blockade and the unfulfilled pledges by donors need to be addressed with urgency.

This year's Solidarity Day, however, is taking place during a recent escalation in violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

The wave of violence across the occupied Palestinian territory continues.

I therefore call for all involved to bring an end to the violence and for strict compliance with international law.

I would also like to stress the importance of upholding the historic status quo at the Holy Sites, including the Haram Al-Sharif.

I urge all Israeli and Palestinian leaders to de-escalate tensions and refrain from provocative actions, incitements and inflammatory rhetoric.

Excellencies, against this backdrop and that of incredible instability right across the region, a lasting solution to this long-standing conflict must be found.

The occupation of Palestinian territory must be brought to an end without any further delay, opening the way for the establishment of a State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel, in peace and security within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 lines.

On 30 September 2015, we raised the flag of the State of Palestine at the UN Headquarters in New York.

This was a symbolic and timely acknowledgement of the contribution of the Palestinian people to addressing our common challenges.

But it was also a reminder of the urgent need for a peaceful settlement on the ground.

It is my hope therefore that the international community will redouble its efforts to find such a settlement and that efforts by the Security Council will bear fruit this year.

Diplomatic initiatives by the Quartet, which reaffirmed its commitment to actively support a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, are welcome and should be pursued.

I call on both parties to return to meaningful negotiations with a pre-established timeframe.

Excellencies, simply put, the Palestinian People have waited too long.

On this Organization's momentous 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, let us recall the ideals of peace, unity and human rights at the heart of the UN Charter.

And let us use those ideals to inspire new momentum to find a lasting solution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Thank you.