



**Statement of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab
States**

**On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity With
the Palestinian People**

To be delivered by Ambassador Wael Nasser Al-Din Al-Assad

Head of Mission of the Arab League

In Vienna

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to convey to you the greetings of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and to deliver his address on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

On 29 November of each year, many nations and peoples of the world come together to celebrate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and to reaffirm their support for their legitimate and inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The commemoration is also an opportunity to express condemnation for all forms of injustice inflicted upon the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli occupation.

November has a special resonance for the Palestinian people, as it is a reminder of the tragic injustice that befell it on that very month, with the attendant suffering that became its daily companion over the subsequent interminable decades. It was on 29 November 1917 that the infamous Balfour Declaration was issued, vowing to establish a national homeland for the Jewish People on the historic land of Palestine. It was also in this 1947 that the United Nations General Assembly passed its resolution 181 on the partition of Palestine into two states: one Arab and the other Jewish. Up until today, and for over a hundred years after the unlawful Balfour promise, the Palestinian people and indeed the whole region never ceased to suffer from its consequences. The Arab Palestinian state envisioned in the two-state solution and unanimously endorsed by Arab nations and the international community alike, is still to be born. Yet, without it, no justice or peace are possible.

On that same day, 29 November 2012, the General Assembly of the United Nations upgraded the status of Palestine to that of an observer State in the United Nations, by 138 votes in favor of the resolution. This was an important and necessary step on the way towards eventual full membership.

Additionally, the State of Palestine also recently became a member of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) by 75 votes in favor. Slowly but surely, Palestine's legal standing is thus being strengthened and expanded.

In that context, the League of Arab States will continue to give its backing to all Palestinian initiatives, and to concerted joint Arab efforts in the international arena, so as to boost the legal status of Palestine and to widen its recognition, particularly with regard to its quest for full membership in the United Nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last October witnessed an important and hopeful event, namely the achievement of Palestinian reconciliation under the auspices of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Ending the state of division and achieving a long-awaited reconciliation could counter Israel's delaying tactics to circumvent the peace process. It would also expose its phony excuses that there is no Palestinian interlocutor with whom peace could be made. It is hoped that the process of reconciliation will continue and all pending issues will be speedily resolved, because that could potentially be a major factor in strengthening the Palestinian position.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fifty years into the occupation, Israel continues to implement a systematic policy designed to destroy the two-state solution and thwart any peace prospects, including through the intensification of its settlement activity and the capture of ever more Palestinian land despite repeated international condemnations and in flagrant violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 of 23 December 2016, which declared all Israeli settlements void of any legal validity in international law.

These Israeli violations are taking place throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. They include trespasses on East Jerusalem and Islamic and Christian holy sites, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as the unjust and unlawful siege imposed on the Gaza Strip for more than ten years now. Other violations take the form of summary executions and the ill-treatment and abuse of Palestinian detainees inside Israeli jails.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Israel has a long history of belittlement of the United Nations and non-compliance with its resolutions. Up until this day, it continues to question its role and the impartiality of its bodies. Yet, Israel is now seeking non-permanent membership of the Security Council for the years 2019–2020. Allowing it to succeed in normalizing its abnormal situation on the international stage would amount to explicitly rewarding occupation. This would only encourage it to go on torpedoing the two-state solution and any peace prospects. All peace-seeking nations must therefore stand united in blocking this Israeli candidacy. The League of Arab States declares its total rejection of it and calls upon all countries to reject Israel's attempts. It would surely be an unbecoming for the international community to elect a State subjecting another under the yoke of occupation and oppression as member of a Council entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The dwindling prospects for a peaceful settlement threaten dire consequences not only for the region but indeed the world at large. It is therefore essential to launch a serious process of negotiations, based on a clear mechanism and time frame, to end Israeli's occupation and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. We hope that all international partners will move seriously and efficiently towards that long-awaited goal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we want to pay a deserved tribute to this valiant and heroic Palestinian people for their extraordinary resilience, despite the injustice and suffering that were heaped upon them. Words of support to the Palestinians or condemnation of the occupation are no longer enough, the time has come to walk the talk. The international community must now resolve to put in action the humanitarian principles enshrined in the international treaties and conventions, so that the power of law may prevail over the law of power and that the Palestinian people may regain freedom and independence and their rights on their homeland.

Thank you and peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings.