



**STATEMENT
BY**

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**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN VIENNA,
AUSTRIA**

**AT THE OCCASION OF THE
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN
PEOPLE**

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**Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thank you Chairperson for this opportunity to participate in the annual commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as mandated by the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 32/40 of 2 December 1977 and 34/65 of 12 December 1979.

On the outset, let me express our deepest condolences to the Government and the People of Egypt following the terrorist attack that claimed more than 300 innocent people. We stand with the people of Egypt during this difficult period.

On behalf of the Government and People of South Africa, allow me to express our deepest solidarity with the Government and the people of the State of Palestine whom we continue to share their painful struggle for peace and the right of self-determination.

Chairperson,

Today marks 40 years since the inauguration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people since 1977. For the past 4 decades, this important day continues to provide an opportunity for Member States and the international community alike to focus the attention on the unresolved question of Palestine. At the same time, this day seeks to increase momentum to ensure that the Palestinian People achieve their self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty and the right to return to their homeland.

On this occasion, South Africa, the international community and other peace-loving nations comes together to call for the end to the injustices and gross human rights violations perpetrated in the occupied Palestinian territories. We remain seriously concerned about the ongoing illegal settlements and displacements of Palestinians in their own land.

Chairperson,

As declared by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement during the 17th Summit in Venezuela in September 2016, "the continued injustice against the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli occupation and its related policies and practices, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, the demolition of houses, the acts of collective punishment against the civilian population, including the imprisonment and detention of thousands of civilians, and the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, are the main source of the violation of human rights of the Palestinian people, in denial of their legitimate right to self-determination and independence".

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the call made by the BRICS countries at the 9th Summit held in Xiamen, China which called for the urgent need for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and previous agreements between the parties through negotiations with a view to creating an independent, viable, territorially contiguous Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

Chairperson,

At the national level, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation in collaboration with the Embassy of the State of Palestine have organized a Seminar entitled "**The Year of OR Tambo & The Palestinian Struggle under Occupation**", to commemorate the United Nations International day of solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This is consistent with South Africa's historical position and demonstrates our strong commitment to the liberation of the Palestinian people. We recall the sentiments expressed by the late former President Nelson Mandela when he said and I quote "**we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians**" close quote.

In conclusion Chairperson, let me reiterate that there can never be peace, security and development in the Middle East without the peaceful resolution of the Palestinian question.

I thank you