



A Statement from the World YWCA & the YWCA of Palestine

United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People November 29, 2017

Today, November 29th, the World YWCA and its member association, the YWCA of Palestine, call on women and men globally to observe the annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people. This is also the day when in 1947, UN General Assembly Resolution 181 recommended partitioning Palestine into two states: one for the Jewish people and another for the Palestinian people.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the World YWCA and YWCA of Palestine. As a young woman from Bethlehem, who has grown up under occupation, I am here to represent the voices of young Palestinian people, especially young women, who have been destined to live the same life. The occupation has created a reality of struggle, insecurity and fear for me. I am restricted inside my own country. Movement is a basic right; one that I have been deprived of. I live every day haunted by the feeling that something might happen at any moment. Every day, a new martyr is announced, another house is demolished and someone is arrested, even children. Isn't it time for the international community to put an end to this? How long do we need to wait? How many people need to die until we attain our freedom?

UN Resolution 181 demands Palestinians' right to national independence and sovereignty, yet my people are continually forcibly displaced from their homes and lands and robbed of their right to self-determination. We therefore remind the Member States of the United Nations that you have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure this resolution is fulfilled.

This year marks the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, the 70th anniversary of the Partition Plan, a half-century of one of the longest military occupations in modern history, and more than 10 years after the siege on Gaza.

We, the World YWCA, and the YWCA of Palestine demand that human rights and international law be affirmed and protected for all. We support Palestine's right to self-determination as guaranteed in UN Resolutions 242 and as reaffirmed in Resolution 338. In addition, we affirm the role of women in peace building and conflict resolution at all levels as detailed in UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

At the same time, as one of the world's largest youth organizations, we support the application of UNSCR 2250 which urges states, UN organizations and civil society to increase meaningful and inclusive youth participation in building a sustainable future which promotes justice, respect and security. We continue to be concerned that all Palestinians--specifically young women--are severely and adversely affected by Israel's degrading and unjust practices, and that the



possibility of building a sustainable peace based on justice cannot be realized as long as these practices and policies continue.

We support the International Criminal Court's investigation into possible war crimes committed in Gaza in 2014, as well as possible crimes against humanity in Occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

In this year of commemoration, let's make occupation history. Let's affirm the right to human dignity for all. We call on all governments and civil society organizations to take the following steps to create sustainable peace:

- Support Palestinians' right to self-determination and defend their right to resist the occupation in creative and non-violent ways;
- Demand that Israel comply with international law, and end the military occupation of the State of Palestine, and support economic, political and cultural measures against Israel until this occurs;
- Support the Right of Return for Refugees so they can return to their homes and properties or make reparations;
- End illegal settlement expansion and stop the annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights;
- Free all detainees held under administrative detention, especially women and children;

The international community has legal, ethical, and moral obligations to act. Solidarity demands more than reports, letters, or statements; it demands our personal and collective action and our commitment to work for justice and sustainable peace.