



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Deputy Head of Delegation

New York, 21 November 2019

**Note to H.E. Mr. Cheick Niang,
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
United Nations**

Subject: International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Excellency,

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the European Union wishes to convey the following message.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is committed to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict through a two-state solution and an agreement that ends the occupation which began in 1967, ending all claims and fulfilling the aspirations of both parties, including Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, on the basis of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

The European Union stands ready to work with both parties and our partners in the region and the international community towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations to resolve all final status issues and to achieve a just and lasting peace. And it will continue to urge both parties to refrain from unilateral actions that undermine the relaunch of the negotiations or imperil the viability of the two-state solution. There is no justification for incitement and violence.

In line with international law, including Resolution 2334 (2106), the EU has consistently reiterated its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context. Settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both States. The EU has also made clear that it will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. We expect both parties, including any future Israeli government, to act in accordance with international law.

The political and security situation in Gaza remains volatile, and the humanitarian situation continues to be a matter of grave concern. All violence, including the firing of rockets into Israel from Gaza, reminds us that restoring a political horizon for peace is essential to reducing violence and containing extremism in the region. We reiterate our call upon Israel to respect the fundamental right to peaceful protest, as well as our call upon Hamas to ensure that protests remain strictly non-violent. We call once again upon all parties to take urgent steps in line with Resolution 2334 leading to a fundamental change in the humanitarian, political, security and economic situation in Gaza, including through an end to the closure policy, full opening of crossing points, and humanitarian access, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. Such steps would implement Resolution 2334 (2016) and would increase the chances for a two-state solution.

Since the refugee issue – another internationally agreed parameter for the solution of the conflict – has also remained unsolved, it is of the utmost importance that UNRWA can continue to provide Palestinian refugees with the necessary protection and essential services. The work of UNRWA is also important for the stability of the region, and the EU will continue supporting it.

The *Palestinian Legislative Council* was dissolved in December 2018. Strong, inclusive, accountable and functioning democratic Palestinian institutions based on the respect for the rule of law and human rights are vital for the two-state solution. In this context, taking note of the announcement by President Abbas to hold elections, a date should be set very soon for elections in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip. The EU calls upon all Palestinian factions to unequivocally commit to democratic principles prior to elections.

Successful negotiations between the parties are possible, as we have seen recently when an arrangement was reached on tax revenue transfers. The agreement shows that progress can be made, if there is political will. Both parties should be courageous to use such political will to advance a two-state solution.

It is still possible to reach peace based on the two-state solution if credible steps are taken. Ultimately, and as the EU has said previously, it is the lack of implementation of international law that is the real challenge to the achievement of peace and security in the Middle East. Progress towards a solution to this conflict would also have an impact on efforts to resolve other crises in the region.



Silvio Gonzato
Ambassador, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.