



**REMARKS AT OPENING OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE  
QUESTION OF PALESTINE  
MADE BY**

**MR. STEFAN PRIESNER,  
UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR FOR MALAYSIA**

**REPRESENTING THE SECRETARY GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Kuala Lumpur, 28 February 2020**

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations, it gives me great pleasure to address you at the Opening of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine – under the theme of “Southeast Asian Support for the Rights of the Palestinian People” – organised here in Kuala Lumpur by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in partnership with the Government of Malaysia and the Perdana Global Peace Foundation.

Let me start by acknowledging His Excellency Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed, Prime Minister of Malaysia, His Excellency Mr. Cheikh Niang, Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, as well as the distinguished guests who travelled from near and far to participate in this important event. The United Nations would also like to commend the Committee for its unwavering commitment to the fulfilment of the inalienable

rights of the Palestinian people, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements. The UN reiterates the commitment to support the parties in their efforts to overcome the current impasse and return to meaningful negotiations to end the occupation and bring a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A resolution that realizes a two-State solution, based on relevant UN resolutions and previous agreements, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

The United Nations Committee has convened this conference in times of tensions in the Middle East, underlining more than ever the need for a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unfortunately, we continue to witness daily violent incidents throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in and around the Gaza Strip. It is deeply troubling to see that the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate, further eroding the possibility of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State based on the two-State solution.

In the days since the United States presented its vision for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, the position of the United Nations, representing the international community, remains that annexation of territory in the occupied West Bank, if implemented, would be illegal under international law and close the door for negotiations for a viable two-State solution. It would also have repercussions across the region and undermine opportunities for peace. Jerusalem remains a final status issue and unilateral steps aimed at changing the status and character of the city are contrary to international law and UN resolutions.

Despite Member States and the United Nations' vital efforts, the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. While addressing the humanitarian crisis must remain a priority, the root cause of the crisis in Gaza is political. It is not possible to genuinely and sustainably improve the socio-economic situation in Gaza without significantly easing restrictions on the movement and access of goods and people, with the goal of ultimately lifting them.

It is critical that the Egyptian-led intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts continue. The United Nations calls on Palestinian leaders to engage constructively with Egypt and others to advance intra-Palestinian reconciliation. The holding of long overdue general elections in the State of Palestine, throughout its whole territory, including East Jerusalem, will be a crucial step towards giving renewed legitimacy to national institutions and reuniting the Palestinian people under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian national government.

The United Nations will continue to support a peaceful resolution of the Question of Palestine, based on our shared multilateral framework set by the United Nations resolutions and international law. The 75th anniversary of our Organization this year is an opportunity to uphold the values of the Charter to advance the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this spirit I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you.

\* \* \*