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**Statement by the
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People
in observance of the
International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

29 November 2020

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Question of Palestine has been on the agenda of the United Nations almost since its inception. This year as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, we have to ask ourselves why, despite our myriad achievements, have we fallen short when it comes to the Palestinian people. Why have we failed to fully deliver on the promise of General Assembly resolution 181 (ii) of 1947 to create two sovereign, adjoining States in the former mandate of Palestine?

In these 75 years, despite occasional signs of hope, we have repeatedly disappointed generations of young Israelis and Palestinians that have desired a peaceful future of two States living side by side in harmony. The 53-year-old illegal occupation of the Palestinian territory is now compounded by threats of *de jure* annexation by the Israeli Government. Palestinians find their basic human rights denied and find themselves constrained from proceeding on the path to self-determination. Israeli checkpoints and the Wall impose barriers on Palestinians'

freedom of movement. Palestinian children continue to experience trauma while held illegally for months in Israeli detention centres. Palestinians continue to face Israel's "creeping annexation" and illegal settlement policy which is in flagrant violation of international law and UN resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). Demolition of homes and structures have reached unprecedented numbers.

In the Gaza Strip, Palestinians are living the thirteenth year of an illegal blockade which continues to isolate and impoverish them as our diplomatic efforts continue to fall short of ending the occupation in practice. Acts of violence, military operations and human rights violations continue to occur relentlessly, heightening tension between Israel and Palestinian groups in Gaza. The COVID-19 pandemic is compounding the already alarming humanitarian and distressed economic situation of the Palestinians.

The shortfall in the funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reached a staggering US\$ 115 million in November 2020, threatening the continuity of vital humanitarian and development programmes for the benefit of 5.7 million Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region.

This situation is neither politically sustainable nor morally acceptable.

The UN Palestinian Rights Committee stands firm with the Palestinian people in their pursuit of peace, justice, equality and a life lived with dignity. The Committee seeks for the Palestinians what has been adequately defined in UN resolutions - the realization of two States, living side-by-side in peace and security, along the 1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

To this end, the Committee supports the call made by the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, for an international peace conference under the auspices of an expanded Middle East Quartet which in turn would allow regional players to contribute to the advancement of the peace process. We welcome the recent announcement by the Palestinian Authority of its intention to resume cooperation with Israel, subject to the respect of bilateral agreements. We also welcome efforts to support intra-Palestinian reconciliation and plans for elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Allow me to say here that while we recognize that recent bilateral agreements are seemingly aimed at normalizing relations between Israel and some countries in the region, the international community should not shift its focus and attention away from the urgent need to resolve the question of Palestine.

The Palestinian people today need more than solidarity. They need determined action from the international community, based on longstanding principles enshrined in the UN Charter, international law and UN resolutions, to help resolve the question of Palestine. The Palestinian people deserve what any of our peoples have: a life of justice, peace and dignity.

Let us use this International Day of Solidarity to call on the entire international community to contribute to a just, lasting solution that delivers on the long overdue promise of peace for the Israeli and Palestinians.

Thank you.