



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

The Ambassador

New York, 20 November 2020

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*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, align themselves with this message.

The European Union extends heartfelt condolences on the passing of Saeb Erekat, Secretary General of the PLO Executive Committee, on 10 November.

The European Union remains united in its commitment to achieving a two-state solution that meets Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation that began in 1967, and resolves all permanent status issues in order to end the conflict.

The EU welcomes the announcement on the normalisation of the relations between the state of Israel and the United Arab Emirates, the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as the announcement of the normalisation of relations between Israel and Sudan. Israel's commitment to suspend plans to unilaterally annex areas of the occupied Palestinian territory is a positive step. Any unilateral decision that undermines a lasting, agreed solution should be avoided. The EU reiterates that any annexation would constitute a serious violation of international law.

** The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

The EU remains ready to support the Israelis and the Palestinians in efforts to resume meaningful negotiations on all final status issues in order to achieve a just and lasting peace. The EU will continue to support all efforts to help resume credible negotiations.

The EU reiterates its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy, which is illegal under international law, and actions taken in this context such as demolitions and confiscations, including of humanitarian structures and EU funded projects, evictions and forced transfers. The EU calls on Israel to halt continued settlement expansion and demolitions in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, especially in sensitive areas such as Har Homa, Givat Hamatos and E1, which seriously threaten the two state solution.

The violence and loss of human lives in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel remain of deep concern for the EU. The Palestinian population continues to face repeated human rights violations and abuses. The EU recalls the importance of unhindered work of civil society organisations, both in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The worsening humanitarian and human rights situation in the Gaza Strip remains of grave concern and the EU calls for an end to the closure, full opening of the crossing points, while addressing Israel's security concerns, and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors.

The EU firmly condemns the increased rockets, incendiary balloons and other attacks from the Gaza strip targeting civilians in Israel, as well as terrorist attacks, and any other form of violence, including a continued upward trend of settler related incidents, and incitement on all sides. While recalling Israel's right to defend its legitimate security interests, the EU expects the Israeli authorities to fully meet their obligations under International Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, not least in these difficult times of the coronavirus pandemic, and including with regards to Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons.

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 recent announcement regarding 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.

The EU reiterates its deep and genuine appreciation for UNRWA's work and for its dedicated staff who are working in an extremely difficult and challenging context. UNRWA is an essential provider of vital services to millions of Palestine refugees, and a stabilising force in the region. Until a just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the Palestinian refugee issue in accordance with international law is found, UNRWA remains crucial for providing the necessary protection and essential services for Palestinian refugees, and we will continue to support UNRWA in all its fields

of operations, including in East Jerusalem. The EU welcomes the additional financial support from other and new donors and calls upon all partners to increase their contributions to UNRWA.

The EU recalls that a lasting solution to the conflict must be achieved on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and of the Arab Peace Initiative, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. The EU reiterates its fundamental commitment to the security of Israel, including with regard to current and emerging threats in the region.

The EU strongly opposes all actions that undermine the viability of the two state solution and urges both sides to demonstrate, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to a two-state solution in order to rebuild trust and create a path back to meaningful negotiations.

Yours sincerely,



Olof Skoog
Ambassador

H.E. Mr. Cheikh Niang
Chair
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People