



**Office of the President
of the General Assembly**
75th Session



**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir,
PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

1 December 2020

Excellencies,

Mr. Secretary-General,

I would like to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for organizing this event to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and for the opportunity to address this poignant event.

Since the founding of the United Nations 75 years ago, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been on our agenda.

Despite the significant efforts that may have been made, peace in the Middle East is unfortunately still far away.

And it is the Palestinian civilians who suffer most from decades of occupation, use of excessive and disproportionate force, arbitrary arrests, demolitions, illegal settlement activities, and other injustices. Of the 5 million people in Palestine, almost half need humanitarian assistance, over a million of whom are children.

Attempts to erode the status of Jerusalem, threats of annexation and the inhumane blockade in Gaza, have all been part of a recurring pattern, which severely curtails the fundamental rights and freedoms of Palestinians.

Generations have been born into this desperate situation.

Generations have lived in a permanent state of emergency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the insecurity and extremely complex humanitarian conditions that many vulnerable Palestinians, including women and girls, already experience on a daily basis.

Distinguished delegates,

The parameters for a resolution to the conflict are clear. In 1947, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, which formed the legal basis for the establishment of the State of Israel, and a second state, for the Palestinian people.

However, in the seven decades that followed, we have failed to establish a state for the Palestinian people.

A two-state solution recognized by Resolution 181, is the only premise for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians, to bring security and prosperity to all.

The United Nations must continue to support Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of international law and bilateral agreements and realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines.

These terms of reference cannot be changed. The rights of Palestinian people are not up for negotiations.

Only constructive negotiations between the parties, in good faith, with support from the international community and adhering to long-standing United Nations resolutions and long-agreed parameters, will bring about a just and durable solution.

I therefore encourage, in the strongest terms, all parties to embrace peace, set aside differences and put the interests of the people they serve first.

Excellencies,

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays a vital role to meet the needs of 5.6 million Palestinian refugees.

Despite their crucial work, funding gaps continue. Last month, UNRWA issued an emergency call for humanitarian assistance amid a dire cash-flow crisis that has left it unable to pay the salaries of its nearly 30,000 employees.

UNRWA needs predictable and sustained funding to ensure stability and security for Palestine refugees. We must do our utmost to support them until a just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees is finally reached, within the framework of a two-state solution.

Excellencies,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my condolences for the passing of Doctor Saeb Erekat who succumbed to COVID-19. He was a true champion of the Palestinian cause and died before the realization of justice, freedom and peace, a goal he dedicated his life to.

Doctor Erekat's vision and this International Day of Solidarity reminds us of our collective, unfinished task of achieving peace in the Middle East. The United Nations will not waver in its commitment to the Palestinian people.

Today, let us reaffirm our commitment to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people and to building a future of peace, justice, security and dignity for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Thank you very much Mr President.