



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

20 May 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to enclose herewith my, "Appeal for Peace" issued in connection with the General Assembly Joint Debate on the Question of Palestine and the Situation in the Middle East.

Our meeting today highlighted the gravity of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza and occupied East Jerusalem. The announcement today of the overdue ceasefire in Gaza is reassuring. This is one of the key demands of Member States at the Joint Debate. The General Assembly's resolve to take action on behalf of Member States is critical to the United Nations. When Member States speak up together, we get results.

I hope all Member States will join me in this appeal and commit to peace for Israelis and Palestinians - today, and every day.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Volkan BOZKIR".

Volkan BOZKIR

All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations



**Appeal for Peace from H.E. Volkan Bozkır, President of the 75th Session
of the UN General Assembly**

**following the Joint Debate on the Situation in the Middle East (item 37)
and Question of Palestine (item 38)**

20 May 2021, UN Headquarters, New York

Today we held the first in-person high-level meeting of the 75th Session of the General Assembly.

It is only fitting that we gathered to discuss the Question of Palestine – an issue that has been on the UN agenda for 75 years.

Our meeting today is reflection of the gravity of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in Gaza and occupied East Jerusalem.

So far, we have heard from over 50 speakers. There are many more member states scheduled to speak. I also held a separate meeting with the foreign ministers in attendance.

Listening to the views of Member States here today I am, as President of the General Assembly, issuing an appeal for peace.

I have seen that there is broad, near unanimous, support for the way forwards:

First, the ceasefire – the bloodshed and violence must end before it's too late. The news just now of the overdue ceasefire in Gaza is reassuring. This was one of the key demands of Member States that we heard from today's debate. This shows that when the General Assembly takes the lead and Member States speak up together, we get results.



Second, Israel, as an occupying power, must adhere to international human rights and humanitarian law.

Third, we must address critical humanitarian needs of the Palestinians. This includes mobilizing support for UNRWA and rebuilding vital public infrastructure that has been destroyed, particularly in Gaza.

Fourth, we must intensify diplomatic efforts in pursuit of intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

Finally, intensified diplomatic efforts must forge a path to viable negotiations between the parties, with the goal of ending the occupation and achieving a viable two-State solution with the State of Israel and the State of Palestine living side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with recognized borders on the basis of 1967 lines with Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

I cannot overemphasize what I said earlier. We have been at this unfortunate juncture too many times. This latest flare-up did not happen in a vacuum. This is not an isolated occurrence. It cannot be divorced from the broader context, of this decades long issue, including the protracted military occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The occupation, compounded by political impasse and lack of negotiations, is the main underlying source of instability, disillusionment, and the perpetuation of this conflict.

The Security Council has yet to even speak with a unified voice about the tragedy unfolding before us – to say that this is disappointing is understatement.

I convened today's meeting in a large part to compensate for the silence of the Security Council.

The General Assembly assumed its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations.



We will be at this point again and again if we do not commit to taking concrete steps towards achieving a just and comprehensive peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

With this in mind, as we reaffirm our collective commitment to multilateralism on this historic 75th Session of the General Assembly, let us commit to do so with actions and not just words.

I appeal to all member states to join me in committing to peace, today and every day.