

**MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR. HAYASHI YOSHIMASA  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF  
SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to reiterate, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, my sincere hope for the realization of Middle East peace at the earliest possible date where an independent Palestinian state and Israel can live side by side in peace and security.

Japan understands the Palestinians' longstanding aspirations for statehood and supports a "two-state solution" to be achieved through negotiations. In this context, Japan is deeply concerned about the current situation in the West Bank, where violence and clashes have increased and caused a large number of casualties. Aggressive actions that increase tensions only deteriorate the situation and we strongly urge all parties to exercise restraint.

In addition, unilateral measures that undermine the realization of a "two-state solution," including Israeli settlement activities, which violate international law, should end immediately. We believe that a truly peaceful resolution cannot be achieved through violence, but rather through dialogue based on mutual trust between the parties. The international community can assist in creating a conducive environment for this purpose. Japan will continue to contribute to trust-building between the parties as well as provide assistance for Palestine for its future nation-building.

The "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, launched by Japan 16 years ago, is an effort to promote confidence-building among parties through economic development projects and to bring the "dividends of peace" to the region in the form of economic benefits. The flagship project of this long-lasting initiative, the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP), aims to develop the Palestinian private sector, with 14 companies currently participating, by contributing to creating jobs and improving the lives of Palestinians. We will continue our efforts to develop Phase 2 and focus on the logistics and IT sectors to attract even more companies to join this initiative.

Japan is also promoting support for the establishment of a future independent and self-sustaining Palestinian state. The Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD), which Japan launched to apply the experience of East Asian countries that have achieved economic growth to the development of Palestine, is part of such efforts. In addition, efforts to build trust and share knowledge through personal exchanges have restarted after the pandemic. We are now gradually resuming the acceptance of JICA trainees and preparing for both the Israeli-Palestinian Youth invitation program and Gaza Teachers invitation program next year.

Japan will continue to support the Palestinian people in resolving humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges in Palestine, especially in Gaza, as long as they exist. Since this April, Japan has provided emergency grant aid of 8,350,000 US dollars through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in response to the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, which has greatly deteriorated due to the COVID19

pandemic and flood damage. In addition, we provided around 3 million US dollars in food assistance to Palestine through UNRWA and WFP in August and September, in order to improve food security and contribute to solving development issues.

The peace in the Middle East is an important issue for the stability and prosperity of the international community, including Japan. Without resolving this issue, there will be no lasting peace in the Middle Eastern region. The international community is now facing many difficult challenges, but the voices of the Palestinian people must not be ignored among them. We should listen carefully to their voices and continue to make utmost efforts toward peaceful coexistence. As Japan is going to join the Security Council from next January, Japan will continue to be actively involved in this issue with the international community toward the advancement of the Middle East peace process.

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