



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. DR. MICHAEL IMRAN KANU
AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

**AT THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE
QUESTION OF PALESTINE AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION**

**AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, UNHQ
NEW YORK; 29th JULY 2025**

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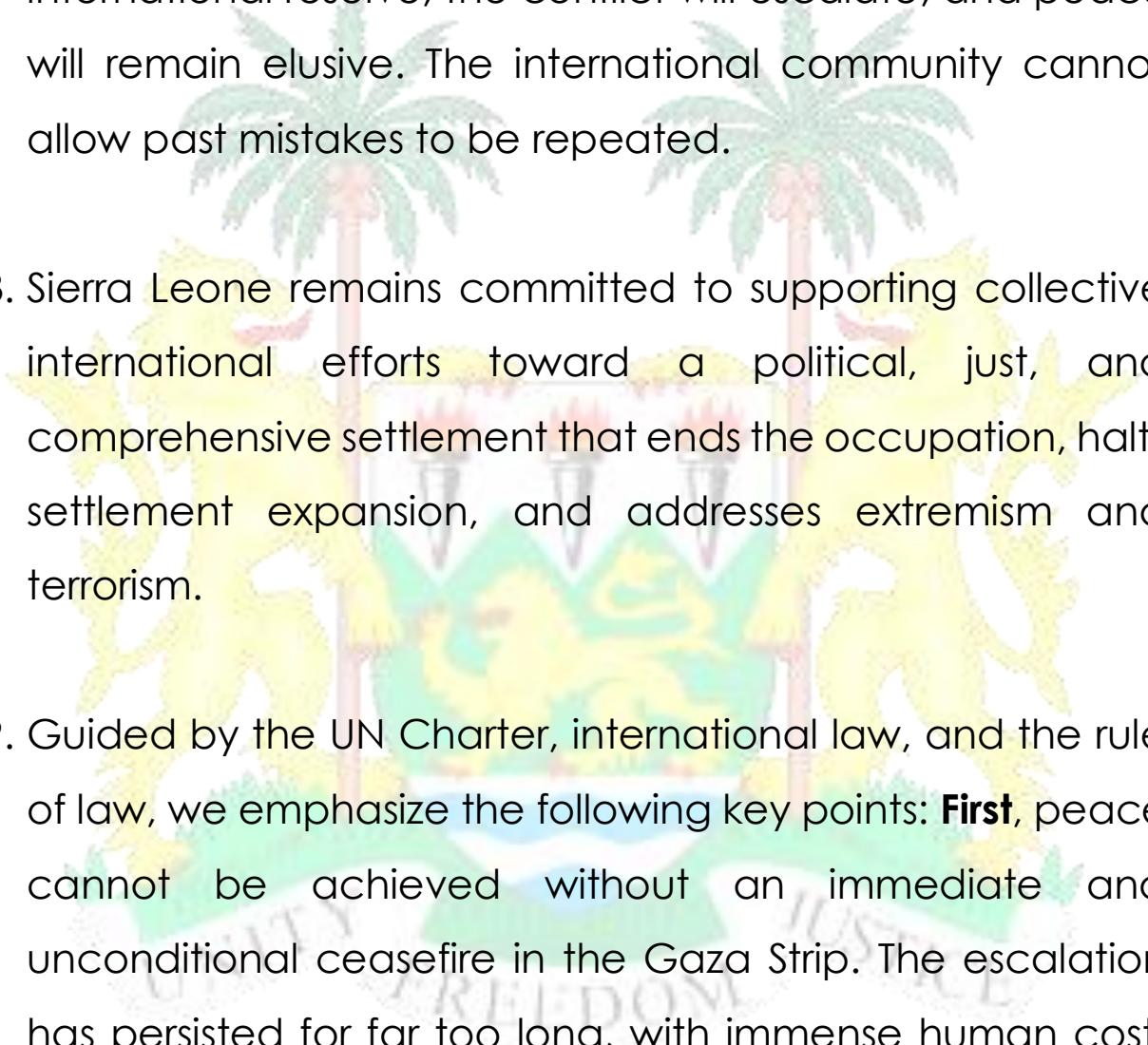
Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,

1. Sierra Leone thanks the **Co-Chairs**, the **Republic of France** and the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, for facilitating the convening of this High-Level International Conference on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, as mandated by General Assembly resolution A/RES/79/1 of 10 December 2024.
2. We view this Conference as a historic opportunity for Member States to reflect on the consequences of an incomplete political process regarding the Question of Palestine and to agree on concrete proposals that can lead to a permanent solution.
3. Sierra Leone welcomes this meeting as a timely reaffirmation of the international community's commitment to a just and peaceful settlement. It comes at a moment of growing international recognition of the State of Palestine and a renewed imperative to implement the two-state solution.

4. The unresolved Palestinian question, dating back to the adoption of **resolution 181 (II) in 1947**, continues to have far-reaching implications for civilians and regional stability. It undermines the vision of two sovereign States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The ongoing Israeli occupation, persisting for more than three quarter of a century, remains a source of instability and human suffering. Bringing this occupation to an end is indispensable to achieving lasting peace.
5. The atrocities committed on and since the attacks of 7 October 2023 highlight the urgency of finding a definitive solution to this protracted conflict.

Excellencies,

6. This Conference reaffirms that the question of Palestine is central to peace in the Middle East. There can be no lasting solution that undermines the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as enshrined in numerous UN resolutions.

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7. While the primary responsibility for peace lies with the parties themselves, we must be clear that in a context of occupation, the occupying power must uphold its obligations under international law. And without firm international resolve, the conflict will escalate, and peace will remain elusive. The international community cannot allow past mistakes to be repeated.
8. Sierra Leone remains committed to supporting collective international efforts toward a political, just, and comprehensive settlement that ends the occupation, halts settlement expansion, and addresses extremism and terrorism.
9. Guided by the UN Charter, international law, and the rule of law, we emphasize the following key points: **First**, peace cannot be achieved without an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The escalation has persisted for far too long, with immense human cost. The suffering in Gaza defies human comprehension. This humanitarian catastrophe is entirely man-made and must end.

10. The cruelty endured by civilians, Palestinian and Israeli alike, is deeply distressing. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages held by Hamas and other armed groups, and the full restoration of humanitarian operations in accordance with international humanitarian law (IHL).

11. **Second**, Sierra Leone reaffirms its unwavering support for the two-state solution, based on relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, beginning with resolution 181 (II) of 1947, and consistent with Article 4(1) of the UN Charter.

12. Sierra Leone recognized the State of Palestine on 3 December 1988 and established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1961. We support the full admission of the State of Palestine as a Member of the United Nations. Our position is consistent with the Charter, the Security Council's Provisional Rules of Procedure, and the guidance of the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 28 May 1948 on conditions for UN membership under Article 4 of the UN Charter.

13. We reaffirm the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including their right to an independent and sovereign State over the entire occupied Palestinian territory, in line with international law and agreed parameters. In line with the call for the recognition of the State of Palestine as a path to peace, we also welcome the announcement by the Government of France of its intention to recognize the State of Palestine in September of this year.

14. **Third**, Sierra Leone supports Israel's right to exist in peace and security, free from threats and attacks, and we reiterate our condemnation of the heinous attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians on 7 October 2023, including the taking of hostages.

15. We recall the Arab Peace Initiative, endorsed in 2002 and reaffirmed in 2007 and 2017, which called on all States in the region to accept Israel as a neighbor living in peace and security within a comprehensive settlement. This vision remains central to achieving a future free from extremism, provocation, and incitement.

16. Accordingly, we urge all armed groups to disarm and renounce violence, paving the way for the demilitarization of the Palestinian territory. Sustainable peace cannot take root while armed groups continue to operate outside the law.

17. **Fourth**, international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be fully respected. The international community has established clear norms to ensure that States and non-state actors uphold fundamental rights and humanitarian principles even in times of conflict.

18. All parties must guarantee the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, including the rights to life, liberty, security, education, and freedom of expression. Respect for these principles will foster trust, justice, and reconciliation, especially where violations have occurred.

Excellencies,

19. The ongoing conflict in Gaza and the West Bank underscores that unless the legitimate concerns of both

Israelis and Palestinians are addressed, Israel's security and Palestinians' freedom from occupation, violence will persist. All relevant UN resolutions must therefore be respected and implemented.

20. Sierra Leone condemns all acts of violence against civilians and calls for independent, impartial investigations to ensure accountability and end impunity. Peace and justice are inseparable. Accountability must extend to all violations of international law, including those that may constitute genocide. We note the ongoing proceedings before the International Court of Justice initiated by the Republic of South Africa under the Genocide Convention, reflecting the international community's resolve to address the most serious allegations.

21. All States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention have an obligation to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, consistent with the UN Charter and international law.

22. We recall the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the

Occupied Palestinian Territory, which found that the wall and Israeli settlements violate international law. We also note the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 on the legal consequences of Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in which the Court concluded that Israel's continued presence is unlawful and must end as rapidly as possible.

23. These findings make clear that the occupation is illegal and must end. States must refrain from supporting or facilitating unlawful policies or actions, as those who aid or abet violations of international law risk incurring legal responsibility.

24. In conclusion, Sierra Leone stresses the need for all parties to engage in good-faith dialogue and to implement the outcomes of this Conference. Women and youth, who have borne the greatest burdens of this conflict, must be fully included in peace efforts. Lasting peace can only be built on inclusion, mutual understanding, and reconciliation.

I thank you.



228 East 45th Street, 7th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017
+1347 760 6058| sierraleone@pmun.net | www.slmissionun.gov.sl