



In 1977, the General Assembly called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The date of 29 November was chosen because of its meaning and significance to the Palestinian people. On that day in 1947, the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), which came to be known as the Partition Resolution. That resolution provided for the establishment in Palestine of a "Jewish State" and an "Arab State", with Jerusalem as a corpus separatum under a special international regime. Of the two States to be created under this resolution, only one, Israel, has so far come into being.

Secretary-General's Message on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November

It has been 65 years since the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181, proposing the partition of the mandate territory into two States. Achieving the two-State solution, to which both Israel and the Palestinians have committed, is long overdue. During my recent trip to the Middle East following the dangerous escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel, I saw yet again the disastrous consequences -- in particular for the civilian populations -- of the absence of a permanent resolution of the conflict. With the Middle East continuing to change rapidly and profoundly, it is more urgent than ever for the international community and the parties to intensify efforts towards peace.

The outlines of an agreement have long been clear, laid out in UN Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles -- including land for peace -- the Road Map, the 2002 Arab Peace initiative and existing agreements between the parties. What is needed now is political will and courage, as well as a sense of historic responsibility and vision for younger generations.

Final status issues can only be solved through direct negotiations. However, much work lies ahead to create the conditions that will allow the resumption of credible and meaningful negotiations and preserve the viability of the two-state solution.

It is crucial to sustain the ceasefire concluded last week that ended more than one week of devastating violence in Gaza and southern Israel. There must be no rocket fire from Gaza, which I have condemned repeatedly. The issues that have been pending since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1860 in January 2009 must be resolved decisively: ending the closure, preventing the illicit trafficking of arms and achieving intra-Palestinian reconciliation. Palestinian unity that supports a negotiated two-State solution is essential for the creation of a Palestinian State in Gaza and the West Bank.

It remains essential that the Palestinians overcome their divisions, based on the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the positions of the Quartet and the Arab Peace Initiative.

It is equally important to preserve the commendable achievements of the Palestinian Authority's state-building efforts in the West Bank and the territorial contiguity it needs. Continued settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is contrary to international law and the Roadmap, and must cease. Unilateral actions on the ground will not be accepted by the international community. Allowing proper development and planning in Area C is also necessary, instead of demolitions and land confiscation. Israel continues to build the wall on West Bank land, contrary to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. I am also concerned about rising settler violence resulting in Palestinian injuries and property damage.

Amid these many challenges to the realization of their legitimate aspirations for statehood, the Palestinians have decided to seek Non Member Observer State status in the General Assembly. This is a matter for Member States to decide. It is important for all concerned to approach this responsibly and constructively.

The goal remains realizing the just and lasting peace for which generations of Palestinians and Israelis have been longing -- a peace that will end the occupation that started in 1967, end the conflict and ensure that an independent, viable and sovereign State of Palestine lives side by side with a secure State of Israel. I call on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to show vision and determination. I also urge the international community to help them forge a credible political path that will meet the legitimate aspirations of both sides.

I pledge to do everything in my power support this goal. On this International Day, I count on all involved to work together to translate solidarity into positive action for peace.

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