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**(Part 1) The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question - Security Council, 7673rd meeting Palestinian Statement and Israel Statement**

Palestinian Representative: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, at the outset, I express the State of Palestine's congratulations to China on its skilled leadership as the presidency of the Security Council this month and express appreciation for the convening of this important open debate today.

I also thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, his Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his briefing on the current situation and for his continuous efforts to address this long-standing issue on the UN agenda in the interests of peace and justice.

Mr. President, since our last debate in January, we have addressed the Security Council on a near weekly basis regarding the critical situation in the occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem as a result of Israel's illegal destructive policies and measures. In each communication to this august Council, we have tried to draw urgent attention to the grave breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights violations being systematically committed by the occupying power, including its occupying forces and terrorist settlers. We have equally appealed for urgent action in line with international law to compel Israel to hold its crimes and violations, which are inflicting widespread suffering on the Palestinian civilian population, further inflaming tensions and destabilizing the situation, destroying the two-state solution, and sabotaging the chances for a peaceful solution.

Regrettably, this is all been to no avail. The Security Council remains paralyzed, failing to uphold its obligations in accordance with its Charter duties, international law, and its own resolutions. It continues debate after debate, consultation after consultation, and letter after letter to disregard the global calls to act seriously to redress this open bleeding wound in the international body by upholding international law and fulfilling its duties to advance a solution for the conflict to assist the Palestinian people to finally realize the freedom, rights, and justice they have been unjustly denied and to achieve Palestinian Israeli peace, security, and coexistence.

Indeed, those are the principal objectives at the core of every appeal we have made to this Council, week after week, month after month, year after year, decade after decade. And our appeals have all been made in full accord with international law and not on some baseless claim or desire. Nothing that we come to this chamber to ask for is beyond the realm of legality, beyond the parameters of justice, or beyond the imperatives of peace. And yet, every time we approach the Security Council we are shedded by a council member and told that it's either not the right time or not the appropriate venue to address the matter or, ironically, that the peace process will be undermined somehow, by seeking rights and peace, or that the doors of the Council are totally closed. Period.

When will it ever be the right time to approach the Council? At what point of crisis will this Council be galvanized to finally act? After years of restraint, years of dramatic decline of the situation to dangerous levels, years of unquantifiable loss and suffering for the Palestinian people, years of destruction of the two-state solution and obstruction of the prospects for peace, and years of immense damage to the Security Council's credibility and the rule of international law, we can no longer wait and can no longer accept excuses and pretexts, domestic or otherwise, that permit the violation of the law and our people's rights by the occupying power with total impunity.

Mr. President, on the ground, the coercive attrition of the two-state solution by Israel’s illegal settlement activities have been unrelenting. Confiscation and de facto annexation of land, settlement construction, wall construction, demolishing of Palestinian homes and property, and forced transfer of Palestinian civilians continue unabated, all in utter contempt and grave breach of international law, including the full Geneva Convention and the Security Council Resolutions, and in blatant mockery of the international community's demands for an end to all Israeli settlement activities.

While in the 26th January open debate we heard loud and clear the reaffirmations of the illegality with Israeli settlement activities and the unanimous calls for a hold to all such policies and measures, what we have witnessed instead is the intensification of this illegal behavior, further fragmenting the continuity of our state’s territory and gravely undermining the viability of the two-state solution on the pre-1967 borders.

Thousands more dunams of Palestinian land have been confiscated by Israel in the West Bank with over 2,300 dunams slated for expropriation south of Jericho and over 1,200 south of Nablus in the span of one week. Alone.

Home demolitions by the occupying power have also alarmingly spiked, as reported by OCHA and UNRWA, with more than 586 homes or structures demolished and more than 700 Palestinians forcibly displaced and rendered homeless since the start of this year. Bedouin Palestine refugees have been especially affected by the demolitions, and entire communities are threatened with forced transfer. Of course, the recent period has also witnessed advancement of plans for the construction of hundreds more settlement units, including in the past week when the occupying power decided to proceed with construction of at least 250 settlement units, which will end up housing thousands more Israeli settlers, adding to the over 650,000 settlers already illegally transferred to the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

The stark reality is that as reported by the Israeli organization Peace Now, plans for construction in Israeli settlements increased by 250% in the first quarter of 2016 as compared to the same period last year. We are thus compelled to ask the Council, does this not seriously call into question, once again, the credibility of Israel’s professed commitment to the two-state solution for of ever ending its occupation of our land? How can these facts in any way be reconciled with the Council’s clear demands for an end to Israeli settlement activities and to all attempts to alter the demography, character, and status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as per its own resolutions? When will the Council hold Israel accountable for these violations and insist on compliance, the minimum most essential requirement for upholding the law overcoming this major obstacle to peace and preserving the possibility of the two-state solution?

Mr. President, in tandem of Israel’s colonization of our land, it continues its aggression against our people with Palestinian casualties mounting as a result of daily military raids by Israeli occupying forces and violence and terror attacks by extremist Israeli settlers in no small part fueled by the incitement and inflammatory rhetoric of Israeli government officials, including by the Israeli prime minister and members of his cabinet and by extremist religious figures.

Since the current unrest began in October 2015, more than 200 Palestinian men, women, and children have been killed with the bodies of many of those killed withheld by the occupying power, even denying them dignity in death. As they did in the war on Gaza in 2014, the occupying forces have also continued to use excessive force, injuring more than 16,000 people, including thousands of children and women, in the past six months. This same period has also witnessed the detention of more than 4,000 Palestinians adding to the ranks of over 7,000 Palestinians, among them 450 children now imprisoned or detained by Israel.

Our children and youth are being especially targeted and traumatized by this cruel occupation as Israeli occupying forces operate on a blatant shoot-to-kill policy with children as young as 13 years of age shot and killed without consequences. The stories of Palestinian children and youth killed in broad daylight, including those extrajudicially murdered by the occupying forces, have become too numerous to recount. Yet we have tried in our weekly letters to the Council to draw attention to these brutal murders and to share the names of the innocent human lives so violently taken and so tragically lost. Faced with such relentless aggression by the occupation, Palestinian children, one generation after another, are being permanently scarred, and the present and future fabric of our society is being destroyed. And yet the Security Council remains silent and the Palestinian people continue to be denied the protection they are in dire need of and entitled to with accordance with humanitarian international law. The reality is that a defenses civilian population is being left to the merciless brutality of this nearly half-century military occupation, armed to the teeth with the most lethal and sophisticated military weaponry.

Our appeals for protection have been met with sympathy at best and indifference at worst. And we have been repeatedly told to be reasonable about what the Council can or cannot do in spite of the Council’s own legislation, including Resolution 605 of 1987 and Resolution 904 of 1994, clearly calling for protection of the Palestinian people, and in spite of the study of precedents shared by the Secretary-General with the Council in October 2015 on which there has been even been—there haven't not been one serious discussion. The failure to protect as in all other cases in history will only foster greater Israeli impunity and disregard for Palestinian life, endangering even more innocent civilians. Not even a discussion in the Security Council about protection has taken place. How shameful of an act is this on the shoulders of members of the Security Council?

Mr. President, at a time when the situation is boiling, the passivity and silence of the Security Council is truly shocking. Stopping the deterioration of the situation and salvaging the prospects for peace require responsible action without delay. While we have heard repeatedly how unsustainable the status quo is, in fact, there is no status quo, and the situation, far from being static, is worsening every single day, including towards an implosion.

The Council cannot stand idly by waiting for the next full-blown crisis. It is illogical and unacceptable to continue appeasing Israel’s intransigent and arrogant reckless flouting of the law. Israel must be held accountable for its crimes and violations of an entire people's rights, including to self-determination and freedom for once and for all.

We have said it before in this chamber and must say it again: the crisis is existential, and we had can no longer wait. We will thus act responsibly to uphold our duties to the Palestinian people, and we'll continue to do whatever we can in the international arena for most here at the UN and fully based on international law using all diplomatic, political, legal, and nonviolent means to redress the plight of our people, alleviate their suffering, and advance the realization of their rights, justice, and peace.

We have thus begun our efforts and continue our appeals for the Council to act through the adoption of a clear and firm resolution to address the immediate issues before us, including inter alia the illegality of the Israeli settlement campaign and its destructive impact on the two-state solution. The rising extremism environment violence of Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and the need for their protection and the urgency of international and regional efforts, particularly within the context of the Arab peace initiative, to create a credible political horizon and support the parties to de-escalate the volatile situation, rebuild trust, and uphold their legal obligations and commitments towards dissolving all final status issues and achieving a just and lasting comprehensive peace.

Consultations are underway with Egypt as the Arab representative in the Security Council, along with our other partners in the Arab Ministerial Committee, for a decision on when to formally proceed. We welcome the support of all concerned parties for this effort and the calls for the Council to uphold its duties towards the question of Palestine before the situation further unravels, more innocent lives are lost, and the two-state solution is relegated to the archives of history. In this regard, we also commend the efforts being undertaken by the Quartet as well as by the Government of France. We note that the French initiative in particular emphasizes the urgency of the matter, a matter that cannot be shelved or placed on a back burner until all other crises in the Middle East are resolved, and one that if left unattended will only cultivate greater Israeli impunity and more fertile ground for radicalization on both sides, and also significantly emphasizes the need for a collective process with the serious engagement and support of international and regional partners, including a role for the Security Council to help the parties resolve all final status issues and finally bring an end to the occupation and the conflict as a whole.

Indeed, it's time to stop management of the conflict. This conflict is not intractable. Its solution has been long known and firmly rooted in UN resolutions, the Madrid Principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. The international community must move beyond slogans and professing its commitment to human rights, justice, and the two-state solution in theory and actually mobilize the political will to resolve the conflict. An alleviation of the humanitarian crises of Palestine can never replace a just solution as the ultimate objective.

It is surreal to witness the collective handwringing of the international community at the deplorable humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip as if it were caused by uncontrollable natural disaster rather than the man-made disaster that it really is, wantonly inflicted by the Israeli war machine and illegal Israeli blockade by air, land, and sea, that has isolated, impoverished, traumatized, and dehumanized the entire Palestine civilian population of Gaza. And despite the deeply regrettable political divide in Palestine and the prolonged efforts to achieve reconciliation and unity as a matter of national urgency, the failure to bridge this divide cannot be used as an excuse to continue imprisoning 1.8 million people and forcing them to live in the ruins of war and in mass deprivation. Faced with this reality and Israel’s relentless onslaught against the Palestinian civilian population and colonization in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, how can it be expected that our people, especially our youth, maintain any belief in international law and the international community's promises to uphold it? How can they maintain any hope that this injustice will end? And in the absence of hope and belief, how is it possible to save of despair and push back against the tide of radicalism and extremism plaguing our world?

Mr. President, the time is long overdue for ending the suffering of the Palestinian people under this illegal foreign occupation and ensuring the realization of their inalienable human rights, including to self-determination and freedom in their independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution to the Palestine plight, the most protracted refugee crisis in the world.

If reason, responsibility, and legal obligations fail to move this Council, perhaps reflecting on the immense human suffering posed by this inhumane occupation might create compassion and invoke moral responsibility to act. There are too many compelling human stories to tell, but I wish to conclude with one today.

On a recent visit to the Aida refugee camp in the West Bank, an Australian premier, Michael Baird, met with a group of young Palestinian children and asked one of the boys what he dreamed of becoming when he was older. The boy’s response was, and I quote, “It's hard to have dreams when you know they cannot come true.” End of quotation.

When children feel they cannot even dream, we must acknowledge the depth of despair and hopelessness and human devastation that this occupation and conflict have wrought. We must also knowledge the depths of our failure and can no longer ignore or postpone the urgency to act. Reviving their hope, rectifying this historic injustice, making peace a reality, and saving the future generations of both Palestinian and Israeli children depend on it.

And I thank you very much, Mr. President.

President of the Security Council: I thank the Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine for his representative. I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Israel: Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, once again, we have been gathered here to discuss the Middle East, Israel, and the Palestinians. Time and time again, we meet in this chamber for this debate. We hear very long discussions about the nature of the conflict and new proposals to solve it, but the root of the conflict is not very hard to understand, and the solution is clear. For 67 years, Israel has been pursuing peace despite decades of war and rejection, we never gave up on this goal. Israel finally achieved peace when two brave Arab leaders, President Sadat and King Hussein, chose to lay down their arms. They chose the path of cooperation, the path of partnership over the misery of war and conflict. This was the key to peace with Egypt in 1981, this was the key to peace with Jordan in 1994, and it is the key to peace with the Palestinians today. The Palestinian people deserve peace. They deserve a brighter, better future.

So let me be clear. On the day the Palestinian leadership rejects terror and violence, on the day they embrace coexistence and cooperation, that is a day there will be peace.

But is that what the Palestinian leadership really wants? Do they really want peace? If you believe they do, then you will have to explain a few inconvenient facts.

Fact number one. The Palestinian leadership refuses to condemn the murder of Israeli men, women, and children. Let me ask everyone in this room, don't Israeli lives matter?

Fact number two. The Palestinian authority glorifies terrorism; glorifies terrorists. They name squares after suicide bombers and hang posters of them on school walls. Tell me, when did terrorism become heroism?

Fact number three. Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the PA, refuses to even sit down with Prime Minister Netanyahu. To sit down. How can we make peace if we can't even talk?

Just recently, the Palestinian Foreign Minister, Riyad al-Maliki, said loudly and clearly, and I quote, “We will never go back and sit again in a direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiation.”

We understand that members of this Council may not have answers to these questions. What we don't understand is why we don't demand answers.

Mr. President, the State of Israel and the people of Israel don't have any more time to wait for answers. For decades, we have been facing Palestinian terrorism. In just the last few months, Israelis have faced a wave of nonstop daily attacks by Palestinian terrorists. Over 300 separate attacks in 176 days. That means two terror attacks a day, every day, for half a year. That is a reality. Thirty-four people have been killed, and hundreds have been injured. How has the Palestinian leadership responded? Have they stopped the daily calls for violence that is fueling the bloodshed? Has there been a clear condemnation by the Palestinian leadership? The answer is no. Instead of condemning these attacks, they encourage them. They reward terrorists and their families with monthly salaries. The more horrific the attack, the more horrific crime, the higher the payment. In Palestinian society, terrorists are treated like heroes.

This year, we all participated in the CSW, Mr. Secretary-General. On International Women's Day, official PA television called Dalal Mughrabi a role model for Palestinian women. For those of you who may not know, may not remember, Dalal Mughrabi was a terrorist. In 1978, she hijacked an Israeli bus and murdered 38 innocent people, including 13 children. This is a woman the Palestinians have turned into a national symbol.

These are facts we never seem to hear in this chamber. Instead, some are all too eager to offer justification for Palestinian terror and excuses for violence. Many find it inconvenient. Many find it convenient to ignore the basic truth, the endless incitement and the ongoing glorification of violence is directly, directly responsible for the murder of innocent Israelis.

For many Palestinians, the incitement is a daily reality. Children go to school and listen to the tales of terrorists. Teenagers turn on the TV and see constant flow of images of hate and violence. Young adults go to the mosques and the hear sermons demonizing Israel and calling for its destruction 24/7.

This reality has deadly consequences. On January 17, a young Israeli mother was painting the door of her house when she was brutally attacked by a 16-year-old Palestinian terrorist. She was repeatedly stabbed at the entrance to her home. Knowing her children were inside, a few meters away, she heroically fought the terrorist, even as she was bleeding to death. She stopped him from pulling the knife from her body with her last ounce of strength. She made sure that the terrorist could not use the knife again to attack her six children.

The woman's name was Dafna Meir. Dafna was a hospital nurse, a loving wife, and the mother of six. At the funeral, Dafna’s husband, Natan, has been said, “You left me six treasures. I will keep them safe for you. My Dafna is one in a million. My Dafna, thank you for every moment I had with you.” One of these treasures, Dafna’s eldest daughter, Renana, said, “I didn't just lose a mother but also my best friend. It's hard for me to think we will not laugh together or fight anymore, that you won't accompany me down the aisle into the maternity ward.”

Today Natan and Renana are here with us in this chamber sitting behind me. They lost a wife and a mother. They paid the most painful price. We have to ask ourselves why did this happen? What drives a 16-year-old boy to stab another human being to death?

The Palestinian teenager, he was arrested. He gave us the answer while he was confessing. And he said that what made him want to kill a Jew, any Jew, was a TV show on Palestinian television. The Palestinian culture of hate and constant brainwashing is responsible for the loss of too many Israelis and is directly responsible for the murder of Dafna Meir

Mr. President, it is time for real answers. It is time for the truth. Since no one else will ask the hard questions, I will. In the name of the people of Israel, in the name of the Israeli victims, and in the name of the family of Dafna Meir, let me ask the Palestinian representative here with us today, Mr. Mansour, will you condemn Palestinians who commit terror attacks against Israelis?

Palestinian Representative: [inaudible] We condemn [inaudible] all attacks against civilians, Palestinians and Israelis, anywhere [inaudible] will you do the same thing?

Israel: I—we’re saying it all the time.

Palestinian Representative: [inaudible]

Israel: You should say it in Arabic, not in English.

Palestinian Representative: [inaudible]

Israel: You should teach in your schools.

Palestinian Representative: We do teach.

Israel: You should stop the hatred.

Palestinian Representative: [inaudible]

Israel: You should stop naming streets after terrorists.

Palestinian Representative: You challenge [inaudible]

Israel: Look at the squares in the Ramallah. Look at the streets in Janīn.

Palestinian Representative: We have … [inaudible]

Israel: You’re naming streets after terrorists.

Palestinian Representative: [inaudible] … fight against incitement. And are you willing to come and attend these meetings in the presence of the Americans?

Israel: We condemn all terrorism in Hebrew, in English, and Arabic.

Palestinian Representative: We condemn the killing of all innocent civilians, including Palestinian civilians. Do you do the same?

Israel: You’re paying them, the families—

Palestinian Representative: Do you do the same?

Israel: —of the terrorists. You’re glorify terrorism. Shame on you for doing that.

Palestinian Representative: We don’t. We don’t.

Israel: Shame on you for glorifying terrorism.

Palestinian Representative: Shame on you for killing thousands of Palestinian children.

Israel: Shame on you for not saying we condemn all acts of terror. Period. That's what we are saying. We condemn all acts of terror. That's what I want you to say.

Palestinian Representative: You cannot say that you condemn civilians...

Israel: You are being translated into five languages. You can say it right now. We condemn all acts of terror.

President of the Security Council: I ask the Representative Israel to continue with his statement.

Israel: Mr. President, silence can be deafening. But in our region, silence kills. It is time for the Palestinian leadership to end their silence and to start acting as leaders. You cannot condemn terrorism. You cannot say still I condemn all acts of terror.

Palestinian Representative: End the occupation.

Israel: You cannot say still people are looking at you. Palestinian children are looking at you right now and to say you cannot say, I condemn all acts of terrorism. One sentence you cannot say. One sentence you cannot say. Shame on you for that.

Palestinian Representative: Let my people be free! Shame on you! Shame on you! Shame on you! You are an occupier.

Israel: Shame on you for not being able to say it.

Palestinian Representative: You are oppressing us. You are sitting on our lives. Leave us alone. Let my people be free. Let my people be free.

Israel: Shame on you. Shame on you.

Palestinian Representative: Shame on you. You are occupier. You are colonizer. Leave us alone.

Israel: We heard those excuses but we haven’t heard any condemnation.

Mr. President, all of us, or maybe all of us around this table know what it takes to be a leader. Leaders assume responsibility. Leaders speak out. Leaders educate for the sake of the next generation. This is a lesson the Palestinians must learn.

On the day Palestinian leaders like Mr. Mansour publicly condemn terror against Israelis—publicly. On the day they end their campaign of hate and violence, on the day respect for all human beings is taught in Palestinian schools, on that day they will find a partner ready to work with them for the promise of peace. The State of Israel, the people of Israel continue to hope that this day will come soon.

Thank you.