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**374th Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

PRESIDENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Thank you, Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by thanking the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for organizing this special meeting and I can align myself very much with the statement just made by the Chair. I commend you for the activities you have led this year to raise awareness of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the conditions endured by the Palestinian people.

It's 40 years since the General Assembly established this Committee. It did so because, by that time, no progress had been achieved towards the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. Those rights include the right to self-determination without internal interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right to return to their homes from which they were displaced.

Today, as we mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, those rights remain unfulfilled, and keen United Nations principles -- namely, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, equal rights and self-determination of peoples -- continue to be violated. In addition, the General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. The General Assembly has also repeatedly affirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

And therefore, gravely concerned by the continuing expansion of settlements, the demolition of Palestinian homes, the revocation of residency rights and the eviction and displacement of numerous Palestinian families from East Jerusalem in contravention of international law, I saw and heard about all this during my visit to the occupied Palestinian territories as Speaker of the Danish Parliament in February last year. Such actions do not contribute to peace. They have become the major impediment and serve only to increase tensions.

I'm also extremely concerned by the very severe humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip following the war in December of 2014, as here described in the statement by the Chair. Efforts to address this humanitarian catastrophe, rebuild homes and lives of thousands of residents affected by the 51-day war have been very, very slow. The blockade of the unfulfilled pledges by donors needs to be addressed with urgency.

This year's Solidarity Day, however, is taking place during a recent escalation in violence in Jerusalem and on the West Bank. The wave of violence across the occupied Palestinian territory continues. I therefore call to all involved to bring an end to the violence and frustrate compliance with international law.

I would also like to stress the importance of upholding the historic status quo of the holy sites, including the Haram Al Sharif. I urge all Israeli and Palestinian leaders to deescalate tensions and to refrain from provocative actions, incitements and inflammatory rhetoric.

Excellencies, against this backdrop and that of incredible instability right across the region, a lasting solution to this longstanding conflict must be found. The occupation of Palestinian territory must be brought to an end and without further delay, opening the way for the establishment of a State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israeli in peace and security within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 lines.

On the 20th of September this year, we raised the flag of the State of Palestine at the UN Headquarters here in New York. It was a symbolic and timely acknowledgment of the contribution of the Palestinian people to addressing our common challenges. But it was also a reminder of the urgent need for a peaceful settlement on the ground. It's my hope, therefore, that the international community will redouble its efforts to find such a settlement, and that efforts by the Security Council will bear fruit this year.

Diplomatic initiatives by the Quartet, which reaffirmed its commitment to actively support a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are welcome and should be pursued. I call on both parties to return to meaningful negotiations with a preestablished time frame.

Excellencies, simply put, the Palestinian people have waited too long. On the organization's momentous 70th anniversary, let us recall the ideals of peace, unity and human rights at the heart of the UN Charter, and let us use those ideals to inspire new momentum to find a lasting solution for the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I thank you.