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**Statement by Ms. Kadra Hassan, First Counselor
Permanent Mission of Djibouti to the United Nations, on behalf of the OIC Group at
the UN General Assembly's Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with
the Palestinian People**

New York, November 25, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I am honored to speak on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This international gathering held in November of every year, consistent with the UNGA's relevant resolution, is indeed a confirmation of continued international solidarity with the Palestinian people and the international community's responsibility towards the Palestinian cause.

I would like to seize this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations and all its organs for this day's celebration. In particular, I would like to thank Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, and the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, His Excellency Ambassador Abdessalam Diallo, for his efforts and effective initiatives in support of the Palestinian cause, which contribute to the promotion of international solidarity and support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights.

Mr. Chairman,

The OIC follows with utmost interest the resumption and developments of peace talks between Israel, the occupying power, and the State of Palestine, and is deeply concerned by the difficulties that Palestinians are facing on a daily basis.

Despite unanimous and historic international recognition of the State of Palestine at the UNGA on 29 November 2012, Israel, the Occupying power, has intensified its violations and aggressions against the Palestinian people, their territory, sacred sites and property. As we gather today to reaffirm our unequivocal support to the Palestinian inalienable rights, Israel pursues its policy of imposing new restrictions on the ground to change the demographic character of the city of Al-Quds, obliterate its identity and isolate it from its Palestinian environs in order to prevent its return to Palestinian sovereignty, through settlements, barricades, and the apartheid wall which constitute grave breaches of international law, undermine the contiguity, unity and viability of the State of Palestine, and jeopardize the prospects for achieving the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders .

By the same token, Israel intensified its aggressions on Islamic and Christian holy sites in the holy city of Jerusalem, especially in the Al-Aqsa Holy Mosque by breaking into its premises and preventing worshippers from accessing the mosque, by desecrating Islamic and Christian sites, distorting the

authentic history of the city, changing its landmarks, demolishing Palestinian homes and closing Palestinian institutions with a view to isolating occupied East Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings. Such illegal acts threaten to expand the conflict to a dangerous religious dimension, which could further destabilize the region. While strongly warning against such unacceptable and unprecedented practices and provocations, the OIC emphasizes that such attacks threaten to further exacerbate the situation in the region, and therefore require responsible international action to compel Israel to stop these serious attacks and violations.

Mr. Chairman,

While reaffirming its unconditional support to the Palestinian position, particularly its demands to stop Israeli settlement activities in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, the OIC calls upon the international community to put pressure on Israel, the occupying power, to stop the activities committed by extremist settlers who block roads, destruct property and seize land, uproot trees and desecrate holy sites, and other grave violations perpetrated against the Palestinian people, their lands and their property, which constitute organized terrorism that add to the record of violations committed by the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories.

Mr. Chairman,

The OIC follows also with deep concern the issue of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons, particularly the policy of torture and administrative detention whereby Israel, the occupying power, detains Palestinians for long periods without trial or charge. These represent a blatant violation of international law and require the international community to compel Israel, the occupying power, to fulfill its responsibilities and abide by the principles of international humanitarian law and to respect its international human rights obligations.

In the meantime, we reaffirm OIC's position that the continuing Israeli illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip is not only a continuation of injustice and aggression, but also constitute a collective punishment and a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, with grave humanitarian consequences on the Palestinian people, and should therefore be brought to an end.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to seize this opportunity to reaffirm OIC's support and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their endeavor to regain their inalienable national rights, including their right to self-determination and independence, and to establishing their independent state having sovereignty on the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

OIC once again calls on the international community and the Security Council in particular to assume its responsibilities and take the necessary concrete action for an immediate and permanent cessation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. We believe that a permanent peace between Israel and Palestine is a sine qua non if both peoples are to focus their energies and resources on developing their societies in peace, harmony and co-existence.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.