

**Draft Statement by the President of the Security Council,
H.E. Ambassador Andrey I. Denisov, on the occasion of the
International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

(29 November 2005)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

This year was marked by substantive steps aimed at ensuring the progress in the Middle East peace process based on the corresponding Security Council resolutions. One of these steps is the withdrawal by Israel from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank of the Jordan River. This will enable progress along the “road map” towards an ultimate goal of two states living side by side in peace and security.

The Security Council unconditionally supports the work of the Quartet and advocates the continuation of the dialogue between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel.

Of course, progress in this dialogue depends on a number of factors notably on confidence-building measures on both sides. Effective actions have to be taken by the Palestinian Authority to halt terrorist activity in the territory under its control and to establish reliable law and order there.

At the same time, we must stress the need for Israel to halt all forms of settlement expansion and to dismantle settlement outposts. Of course, the legitimate concerns of the Israeli side with regard to ensuring its own security must be taken into account.

Mr. Chairman,

It should be pointed out that, without visible improvements in the everyday life of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, the certain degree of hope existing now in the Palestinian lands may turn into disappointment, which extremist forces will not fail to exploit. In this context, ensuring freedom of movement of Palestinians and Palestinian goods, their relations with the outside world, and clear observance by the parties of the principle of refraining from steps that might predetermine the outcome of the final status negotiations — all this must promote movement forward along the path of a long-term political settlement.

In this connection, the Security Council welcomes Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on 15 November 2005, and calls on the parties to take immediate action to implement the terms of both agreements to the time lines established therein.

The Security Council fully supports the holding of free, fair and transparent Palestinian legislative elections next January.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I should like to say that the Security Council is united in the view that the international community must take concrete steps to ensure that extremists do not undo the positive changes in the Palestinian-Israeli settlement. These changes must make it possible to resume the implementation of the provisions of the "road map" and to come closer to achieving the final goal — peace and security for both Israel and independent Palestinian state.
