

**STATEMENT BY THE
PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE
New York, 29 of November 2011**

I would like to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me to address this meeting in my capacity as President of the Security Council for November.

We are here today to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Throughout the last year, the Council has remained seized of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and continued to receive monthly briefings on the situation from the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator and the Department of Political Affairs and to hold regular open debates.

The past year has witnessed historical developments in the Middle East. The winds of change blowing throughout the Arab world have emphasized even further the urgency of a peace agreement that ends the Arab-Israeli conflict and resolves all claims. The Security Council has thus called upon Palestinians and Israelis to seize the opportunity to reach a peaceful and final settlement.

The Council remains fully committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with mutually agreed and recognized borders. Council members have underscored that a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians and the final settlement of all core issues can only be achieved through direct negotiations. Council Members have also reiterated their support for an agreed, just and fair solution to the refugee issue.

Council members have expressed concern about Israel's continued settlement activity and reiterated their view that settlements undermine peace efforts and the two-state solution and stressed the need for respect of international obligations in this regard. Council members have also expressed concern regarding the recent decision by Israel to once again withhold Palestinian tax revenues and recalled in this regard the position of the AHLC that clearance of revenue collection by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority should be efficient, transparent and predictable. These revenues should also be transferred to the Palestinian Authority on a regular schedule.

Over the course of the year, Council members have continued to express concern at the firing of rockets from Gaza.

Council members took note of the reconciliation agreement signed by Palestinian factions in Cairo on 27 April.

A number of significant events have taken place in recent months.

On 18 September, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met in New York. There, based on reports and recommendations from the parties, the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the Quartet Representative, the donors reconfirmed their assessment that the institutions of the Palestinian Authority are above the threshold of a functioning State in the key sectors they studied. Council members have welcomed this positive appraisal and commended the Palestinian Authority for its achievements.

On 23 September, President Mahmoud Abbas submitted to the Secretary-General the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations. This application is now before the Security Council following the adoption of a report by the Council's Committee on the Admission of New Members on 11 November 2011.

On that same day, the Quartet issued a statement in which it took note of the application submitted by President Abbas, reaffirmed its statement of 20th May 2011, including its strong support for the vision of Israeli-Palestinian peace outlined by United States President Barack Obama and recalled its previous

statements, which provide that negotiations should lead to an agreement that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and results in the emergence of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its neighbours. The Quartet affirmed its determination to actively and vigorously seek a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 1850, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, and the agreements previously reached between the parties. The Quartet also reaffirmed the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and provided a framework and timeframe for the resumption of negotiations without delay or preconditions.

The Security Council has recognised the key role of the Quartet in the efforts to re-launch the Middle East Peace Process. Council members have expressed their full support for the continued efforts of the Quartet and its statement of 23 September.

On 18 October, Israeli Sergeant Gilad Shalit and 477 Palestinian prisoners were released in the first stage of a prisoner exchange agreement. Council members continue to view the situation in Gaza with concern and repeat their calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1850 and 1860, and in that context they stressed the need for a sustained and regular flow of goods and people to Gaza, as well as unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza.

The Council welcomed the Quartet envoys' meetings with the parties in Jerusalem on the 26 October and 14 November, as well as the parties' expressed readiness to engage with the Quartet to resume direct negotiations. The Council urges the parties to submit to the Quartet the comprehensive proposals on territory and security each party has committed to present within three months, as called for in the September 23 statement.

As the Quartet has stated, unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community. The Council has echoed the Quartet's 23 September 2011 calls upon the parties to refrain from provocative actions if negotiations are to be effective.

Finally, the Security Council has commended the laudable efforts of humanitarian organizations and agencies on the ground, particularly those of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its staff. We encourage all members of the international community to support the Agency with financial contributions.

Looking ahead, the Security Council will remain seized of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and will continue to consider the issue on a regular basis and to act to uphold its responsibilities under the Charter and consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions on the matter.

In conclusion, allow me to assure all Member States of the commitment of the Security Council to the ultimate goal of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East and to the realization of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people for an independent and democratic State.