

Permanent Observer Mission of the
AFRICAN UNION to the
United Nations

الاتحاد الأفريقي



Mission Permanente d'Observation
de l'UNION AFRICAINE auprès
des Nations Unies

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STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MRS. SHARENE LOUISE BAILEY,
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES. A.I.,
PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO THE UNITED
NATIONS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

NOVEMBER 29, 2017

**Excellency, Mr. Fode Seck
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Right of the
Palestinian People**

Excellency, Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, President of the General Assembly,

Excellency, Mr. Sebastiano Cardi, President of the Security Council,

Madam Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations;

Excellency Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine,

**Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Head of the
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York,**

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered today, as we have done for the past forty years, to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in support of the just struggle of the Palestinian People and the State of Palestine in their quest for the restoration of their legitimate right to establish an independent state of Palestine co-existing peacefully on the borders of June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I wish to commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for organizing the international Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the unresolved question of Palestine and reiterate our solidarity with the Palestinian People. I also wish to pay tribute to H. E. Ambassador Fode Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal for his Sterling leadership of the Committee.

I bring warm greetings of solidarity and support from H. E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

Our continental organization has consistently defended the cause of Palestine, placing it as a priority on the agendas of all Summit Meetings and adopting relevant decisions, resolutions and Declarations as a clear demonstration of the African Union's solidarity and support to the cause of the Palestinian People.

The African Union commends and welcomes the reconciliation deal reached in Moscow earlier this year in January between Palestinian organizations to form a unity government including the most recent signing of the intra-Palestinian agreement on 12 October 2017.

The African Union expresses grave concern over the critical situation of Palestinian refugees. According to recent report, the Israeli occupation in Palestine continues to adversely define every aspect of the daily lives of youth and camp residents, affecting everything from security and freedom of movement to livelihoods and employment. For the past two years, Palestine refugees continued to face serious protection challenges due to ongoing occupation, armed conflict and displacement, sinking deeper into poverty and desperation.

Mr. Chairman,

Clearly, conditions on the ground remain volatile and the situation in East Jerusalem and the West Bank continues to be a source of serious concern. We reiterate the African Union's condemnation of the illegal settlements in the West Bank, Jerusalem and in the occupied territory of the Syrian Golan Heights and the continued occupation of Palestinian lands and the Judaization campaign aimed at changing all Islamic and Christian features of the Holy City and reducing the Palestinian population to the fullest extent through the confiscation of their lands and the destruction of their homes.

We further re-echo the Demand of the African Union for the immediate lifting of the land and sea blockage imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip and all other restrictions.

Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably, as we meet today, the path towards durable peace remains unclear. The peace process now hangs from a thread and the process of rapprochement seems to be slipping away. The lack of progress against the backdrop of renewed tension requires sustained collective attention. The international community should continue to support the parties to overcome their differences and return to the peace talks on the basis of the two-state solution. The United Nations and the Quartet have a pivotal role to play in this regard.

As we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we call upon the international community and all stakeholders to strengthen their support and assistance to the Palestinian people to ensure the realization of their inalienable rights and the establishment of their own viable state including achieving durable peace within the region.

I thank you for your kind attention.