

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF SECURITY COUNCIL on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on November 29, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1. Let me begin by thanking the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me in my capacity as the President of the Security Council for November to address this meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

2. The Security Council remains committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. The Security Council also remains committed to [seeking](#) a comprehensive resolution of other Arab-Israeli issues and in this regard, recalls its previous relevant resolutions and notes the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative.

3. Throughout the past year, developments in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remained prominent on the Council's agenda. The Council has remained seized of these issues, and continued to receive monthly briefings on the situation from the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator and the Department of Political Affairs and held regular open debates. The Security Council also discussed these issues at a High Level Meeting, during the month of September 2012 on strengthening of the relationship between the Security Council and the League of Arab States. In the context of recent hostilities affecting the Gaza strip and Israel, the Security Council also held a private meeting on 14 November 2012.

4. The [application](#) of Palestine for membership to the United Nations was one of the main issues considered by the Security Council and its Standing Committee on Admission of New Members in the last quarter of the year 2011. The issue remains before the Council following adoption of the report by the Committee on Admission of New Members in November 2011. The Security Council also discussed early this year an invitation extended on behalf of President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian leadership for the Security Council to undertake a visit to the region.

5. Over the course of the year, members of the Council expressed concern at, and many condemned, the steady expansion of Israeli [settlements](#) in the occupied Palestinian territory, terming them as illegal under international law or illegitimate. The members also reiterated their view that such actions undermine peace efforts and

the viability of the two-State solution, and stressed the need for respect of international obligations in this regard.

6. Despite several commendable bilateral and multilateral initiatives leading to some notable developments, the Council members regret to note that the direct talks between the parties have not resumed. The members have repeatedly stressed the importance of resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and encouraged both sides to keep direct contact so as to maintain positive momentum towards resumption of dialogue and negotiations.

7. 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 stress the need for a sustained and regular flow of goods and people to Gaza, an end to the smuggling of weapons and rockets, as well as unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza. The Council members also continue to express concern at, and many condemned, the firing of rockets from Gaza into southern Israel. The Council, in a press statement on 21 November, welcomed the ceasefire agreement reached in relation to the Gaza Strip in order to bring about a sustainable and durable cessation of hostilities affecting the Gaza Strip and Israel and expressed their continued support for the ongoing international efforts to consolidate the agreement. The members of the Security Council also deplored the loss of civilian lives resulting from the recent escalation.

8. Council members have noted the results of the most recent Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting on 23 September 2012. In the meeting, the donors based on reports and recommendations from the parties, the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the Quartet Representative, reconfirmed their assessment that the institutions of the Palestinian Authority are above the threshold of a functioning State. Council members have welcomed this positive appraisal, and stressed the need for continued strengthening of Palestinian institutions. Council members are also cognizant of the importance of continuing financial support to the Palestinian Authority, in view of its critical financial situation.

9. The past year continued to witness historical developments in the Middle East. The momentous changes across the region have emphasized even further the urgency of realizing a peace agreement that ends the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Israeli-Palestinian 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.

10. The Security Council expresses the hope that urgent efforts will be made, based on 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, towards a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a solution should end the occupation that began in 1967 and result 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.

11. The Security Council has recognized the key role of the Quartet in the efforts to re-launch the Middle East Peace Process and the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative as well. Council members have expressed their full support for the continued efforts of the Quartet and its statements, including that of 23 September 2011.

12. The Council urges the parties to work constructively with the Quartet towards this endeavor, and stresses that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community.

13. The Security 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. The Security Council remains committed to upholding its duties and supporting a credible negotiations process between the parties, aimed at the early conclusion of a peace agreement.

14. Finally, the Security Council commends 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. The Council encourages all members of the international community to support the Agency with much needed financial contributions at this critical time.

15. In view of the critical situation on the ground and of the need for progress to be made in the political process, 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.

16. 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.

I thank you.

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