



SOUTH AFRICA'S MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

29 NOVEMBER 2021

The South African Government joins the international community today in observing the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as well as in renewing our shared commitment to a just and lasting solution to the Question of Palestine.

We wish to use this opportunity to underscore that South Africa remains unequivocally committed to, and values efforts aimed at reviving a political process leading to the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, existing side by side in peace with Israel within internationally recognised borders, based on those existing on 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in compliance with all relevant UN Resolutions, international law and internationally agreed on parameters.

We reiterate that any peace plan should not allow Palestinian statehood to devolve into an entity devoid of sovereignty, territorial contiguity and economic viability. In this regard, a solution must be premised on a just settlement with just laws that are rights-based and that facilitates equality and equity for all who have a right to live in the territories of Israel and Palestine. This includes sovereign equality between States.

The recent designation of six Palestinian civil society groups as terrorist organizations by Israel is without justification. In this regard, we call on the Israeli government to stop the systematic disruption of the essential services provided by these organizations by de-classifying them as non-terrorist organizations.

The South African Government also calls on Israel to allow and grant the necessary access of human rights organizations to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons and interrogation centers where Palestinian prisoners are detained.

The international community must also intensify the call for international action with the UN playing a leading role to eliminate acts of discrimination and violations of basic human rights that Palestinians are subjected to on a daily basis under unjust Israeli laws.

South Africa remains concerned by recent pronouncements by the Government of Israel to further advance annexation plans and the continued illegal settlement expansion by Israel which constitutes a contravention of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The continued illegal practices and violations of international law and UN resolutions with impunity by Israel is a fundamental obstacle to a return to negotiations and a grave threat to the very existence of a future Palestinian state as well as a safe and secure Israel and region. South Africa calls for the effective and immediate implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), which reaffirms that Israeli illegal settlements have no legal validity.

South Africa commends the contributions of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) which has had a significant impact towards restoring the dignity of the Palestinian people by improving their living conditions through the provision of emergency relief, health and social services, descent accommodation, and access to education. The work of the Agency during the COVID-19 pandemic should be applauded as it has alleviated the already dire humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The situation between Palestine and Israel feeds into the wider regional dynamics by having a negative effect on peace, economic development, socio-political progression and security throughout the entire Middle East region. Therefore, peace in Israel and Palestine is inextricably linked to peace in the region.

The South African Government believes that the only way to bring about lasting peace in the Middle East is to have a two state solution for Palestine and Israel in accordance with international recognition and independence of the State of Palestine, based on the 04 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, functioning within recognized and secure borders and living side-by-side in peace with Israel and its other neighbours as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Thank you.