



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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Press Release

Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 01 December, 2016: The African Union hosted the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people in collaboration with the Palestinian Embassy to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The event was held in the context of the 39th Anniversary of the Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In 1977, the General Assembly called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (*resolution 32/40 B*). On that day, in 1947, the Assembly adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine (*resolution 181 (II)*).

In resolution 60/37 of 1 December 2005, the Assembly requested the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, as part of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, to continue to organize an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights or a cultural event in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN.

In his keynote address, Amb. Nasri Abujaish, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Ethiopia and the AU expressed gratitude to all well-wishers who joined the Palestine community to commemorate the 39th Anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people. Amb. Nasri extended words of appreciation to the UN in Ethiopia, the AU and the League of Arab States for their unlimited cooperation and support to the Palestinian cause. *“The day of solidarity provides an opportunity for the international community to focus its attention on the fact that the question of Palestine is still unresolved and that the Palestinian people are yet to attain their inalienable rights, the rights of self-determination, the right of national independence and sovereignty,”* he added. Ambassador Nasri reaffirmed that majority of the international community’s support Palestinian rights which according to him is vital and crucial in achieving Palestine independence and as such called on the UN to declare 2017 as the international year to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land as well as its people.

Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, Acting Executive Secretary, UNECA in his introductory statement underlined that “The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people reminds the international community of the ongoing struggle of Palestinian people.” Dr. Abdalla highlighted that the Israelis have expanded their illegal territory in Palestine and that Gaza remains a humanitarian emergency with over 2 (two) million Palestinians struggling with a crumbling infrastructure and paralyzed economy. He underscored that the people of Palestine are in need of undeniable rights which they are yet to attain; such is their right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty without external influence. In conclusion, he affirmed that the United Nations is determined to continue supporting the Palestinian cause.

H.E. Dr. Elham Ibrahim, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission (AUC) delivered her opening remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the AUC, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma stating that “The African Union Commission is honored to co-host the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people,” and reiterated AU’s continuous support to the Palestinian cause. H.E Dr. Ibrahim further

implored the call for peaceful solution, negotiation and for lasting peace and urged the Israelis to refrain from using force against arbitrary arrest and to stop violating the Geneva Convention.

Also speaking during the event was Amb. Salah Sahboon, Ambassador of Arab League to Ethiopia and the AU who emphasized the need to embody firm historical commitment of Africa for the liberation of Palestine underlining the importance of collective responsibility in order to protect and promote the Palestinian Peoples' full rights. He strongly condemned Israeli occupation in the land of Palestinians, the systematic crimes of Israel genocide as well as the violations of all norms including Israeli settlers which has worsened the situation regarding occupation in Palestine. He further added that more than 8,000 (Eight Thousand) Palestinians are in jail, detained under administration and arrested without judicial process; thus disregarding basic human rights.



Mr. George Okutho, Resident Coordinator, United Nations said that “the Israel/Palestine conflict is not only one of many conflicts in the region, but is in many ways a long standing gaping wound that has spread tension and conflict throughout the Middle East.” He pointed out that Gaza remains heavily reliant on Humanitarian Aid asserting that the UN is committed to work with stakeholders to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people with future of peace, justice, security and dignity.

Meanwhile, Mr. Suleiman Dedefo, Director, Middle East Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia stressed that a cooperative and long lasting peace can be achieved through peaceful negotiation, peace talks and affirmed that, the government of Ethiopia will continue to work with international organizations to fight for lasting peace for the Palestinian people.

The Chair of the event, Amb. Salah Siddig Hammad, AUC Department of Political Affairs' Senior Human Rights Expert, had this to say on the Commemoration of International Solidarity *"The Commemoration of International Day of Solidarity is commemorated at the AU because the AU supports the Palestinian cause and equally supports its values of freedom and justice."* He indicated that the suffering of the Palestinian people has worsened; with eight (8) million Palestinian people dispersed around the world since the Israeli occupation in 1967 and urged the international communities to work together for the realization of a peaceful and independent Palestine.

A fifteen (15) minutes movie on the Palestine cause was played which was followed by words of solidarity from ambassadors and representatives of various embassies and countries expressing their solidarity for the Palestinian cause in their quest for self-determination and the return of their rightful land.

The event which saw a vote of thanks from Ambassador Nasri Abujaish ended with a photo exhibition. The resolution on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People also encouraged Member States to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the Day of Solidarity.

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