



A Message from H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas

Our challenge as Palestinians is greater than ever. After 50 years, we are the only remaining people in the world who still live under occupation. And it has been over 100 years that we have been actively denied our right to self-determination, along with all the hardships associated with the denial of that right: exile and forced displacement, occupation and subjugation, harassment and incarceration. There is no doubt that the balance of power is still weighted firmly against us. But I believe in our people and I believe that, even in these circumstances, we can and will prevail. We have truth on our side and strength in our hearts.

Our vision for peace remains clear and consistent: Two sovereign and independent states on the 1967 border: the State of Palestine – with East Jerusalem as its capital – living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel. Jerusalem, the open city that befits its rich history as the cradle of the three monotheistic faiths. A just solution to the refugee issue based on the Arab Peace Initiative (API) and UNGA 194. And the freedom of all Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

We have been committed to exploring and developing creative solutions based on international law and relevant UN resolutions. The API is a regional proposal that has been on the table since 2002. It offers Israel normalized relations with 57 Arab and Islamic countries, in exchange for Israel's withdrawal to the 1967 borders (based on UNSC Resolution 242), a just and agreed-upon resolution to the refugee issue (based on UNGA Resolution 194), and the

acceptance of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. So far, Israel has ignored this historic offer. And yet, our offer stands. There is no direct pass to normalization between Israel and the Arab World without Israel fully ending its occupation of the State of Palestine, while implementing its obligations under international law.

From our side, we have focused on a strategy of internationalization in order to create conditions for our people to achieve their legitimate right to freedom and independence, while giving the two-state solution – and peace – the best chance of success. This strategy aims to bring the Palestine Question to a multilateral forum, to root a solution even more firmly in international law, to adhere to universal principles and global standards, and to engage the support of the international community in order to hold all parties accountable to international law and previously signed agreements. Without accountability for violations – particularly relating to Israel as the Occupying Power – there can be no hope of a just and lasting solution.

The occupation has survived for 50 years, and during that time it has been actively transformed from a military occupation to a project of settler colonialism. Ultimately, however, the situation is as untenable as it is unacceptable. No people in the world would tolerate living under these conditions, and we are no exception. We are mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers. More than anything we want a safe environment and a future full of opportunity and possibility for our children, our grandchildren, and all future generations of this vibrant and beautiful land.

We are a small but great nation, proud of our diversity and identity. We educate our children to respect themselves and others by standing up against injustice wherever it is found. We build our institutions based on the implementation of their responsibilities under international law. Palestinian Muslims, Christians, and Samaritans live and worship side by side, working together towards freedom and justice. We are a people famous for our hospitality and are keen to achieve our full potential as an independent and sovereign state, welcoming people of all faiths to the Holy Land.

We look forward to a day when, instead of commemorating 50 years of occupation, we celebrate the end of this occupation – and with it the beginning of independence, justice, peace, and stability in our region and beyond. In the meantime, the Palestinian people will remain steadfast.

President Mahmoud Abbas