

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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**STATEMENT BY
PROF. EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OIC
AT THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY
WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE
29 NOVEMBER 2010
THE UNITED NATIONS – GENEVA**

Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva,

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we meet here today to affirm the international community's solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just struggle to regain their inalienable rights, I am pleased to express the deep appreciation of the OIC and its Member States to the United Nations and its organs and committees for their role in promoting the Palestinian cause, and for their constant support and backing of the Palestinian people in their just struggle to regain their inalienable national rights. I would like to highlight in particular the commendable efforts made by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Your Excellency's outstanding efforts in this regard.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People comes this year at a time when the Palestinian cause is going through difficult times. Difficulties stem from the persistence of Israeli aggression, and its obstinacy in perpetrating its illegal practices, as well as creating de facto realities on the ground. Added to this is its flagrant contravening of the tenets of International Law and the terms of reference of the peace process.

The world has recently witnessed the Israeli attitude on the issue of settlement. Ignoring the international community's demands and efforts to stop settlement activities in occupied lands, Israel, the occupying power, has persisted in defying international law and intensifying colonial settlement, and is indeed accelerating settlement-building in the West Bank and the occupied East Jerusalem. Adding insult to injury, Israel has encouraged settlers' violence against Palestinians. This wave of violence has risen sharply this year and gone beyond killing and harming Palestinians to destroying their crops and uprooting thousands of

olive trees. No other occupation force has ever done this before. This is an Israeli phenomenon *par excellence*.

At the same time, the Israeli violations of international law in occupied East Jerusalem have become more intense. Israeli authorities are conducting a systematic process of altering the historical Arab-Islamic identity of East Jerusalem through attempts to judaize it, denigrate its sanctities, tamper with its history and change its demographic composition in a flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

On a parallel track, Israel continues to impose an unjust blockade on the Gaza Strip and to carry out blatant attacks on international relief caravans at sea, preventing them from delivering assistance to the besieged population of the Gaza Strip. At the same time, it prevents the entry of vital goods and the construction materials needed to rebuild what was demolished by its recent aggression, making thousands of Palestinian families homeless. Israeli persistence in its blockade requires the international community to act seriously not only to lift the unjust blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, but also to bring Israel's leaders and officers who are responsible for this blockade to international justice. Now is the time for international justice to prevail and for Israel to comply with the will of the international community and to respect the provisions of international law, which it has repeatedly violated by acting in total impunity as a state that is immune from any accountability.

Mr. Director General

Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The failure to find a just solution to the Palestinian cause as the core of the Middle East conflict perpetuates instability in the

region and constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The international community should exert serious efforts to compel Israel to abide by the terms of reference of the peace process and to respect and implement the agreements and understandings reached in that regard.

In this connection, the OIC believes that the success of the peace process in reaching the aspired goals depends on a number of criteria on top of which is ending colonial settlement activities, which is one of the key obligations that Israel must meet. Israel must also refrain from carrying out all unilateral acts aimed at imposing new realities on the ground and prejudicing the outcome of negotiations. Needless to say that peace talks are meaningless as long as Israel seeks to dictate the negotiations' outcome. It is also self-evident that the success of negotiations is largely contingent upon the existence of a clear timetable, implementation mechanisms, credible international monitoring and the ability for fair intervention. There is need to recall here that the aspired viable solution must be founded on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the terms of reference of the peace process which was launched in Madrid and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In conclusion, I reaffirm and reiterate the OIC and the Muslim World solidarity with the Palestinian people in their endeavour to regain their national inalienable rights, including their right of return, self-determination and the establishment of their independent Palestinian State on their national soil with East Jerusalem as its capital.

I wish your meeting success in reaching its noble ends.