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**REPORT ON PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST
FOR THE PERIOD JULY 2016 - JANUARY 2017**

REPORT ON PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST FOR THE PERIOD JULY 2016 - JANUARY 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report chronicles the political developments in the Palestine and the Middle East over the period July 2016- January 2017. Through the report, we reaffirm the African Union's solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggles to regain their freedom and recover their lost territories which are illegally occupied by the Israeli colonizers since 1967. The report reaffirms the long-standing African position on the inalienable right of Palestine to exist as a State on all the Palestinian territories. African support for the Palestinian cause is within the framework of the Afro-Arab Partnership at whose core is the African solidarity to the struggles of Palestinians and the Arab world against colonial imposition and aimed at attaining freedom, justice and self-determination, all of which are at the core of African shared values.

2. On the occasion of its January 2017 Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the African Union reaffirms that just, comprehensive and durable peace, stability and security can only be achieved in the Middle East region by ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, based on the 4 June 1967 borders. This would also enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate national rights. This will also allow Palestine to recover its right to exist as a key State in the region where a major part of the history of humanity was written, and which is the cradle of prophets, religions and civilizations, the world is duty bound to preserve.

3. The African Union warns of the consequences of the continuation of repeated provocations by Israel of Muslim and Christian feelings throughout the world, through the dangerous and illegal escalating policies aimed at the judaization of Al Quds (Jerusalem) and the division in time and space of Al-Aqsa Mosque. It also warns against the illegal actions of Israel aimed at altering the demographic composition and geographical reality with its policy of construction of settlements and encouraging Jewish migration to Palestine, the blockade and isolation of the Gaza Strip from the rest of the Palestinian territories, since these practices represent a real threat to international peace and security in the region, and undermine all the terms of reference and the spirit of the Arab Peace Initiative.

4. The African Union also calls on the international community to assume its responsibility vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and the implementation of UN and other international resolutions taken from 1948 to date, to compel the colonizing State to comply with international law, in a region experiencing armed clashes and conflicts which could erase its identity and alter its cultural and demographic paradigm, fragment its States and pose a threat to international peace and security, through mass exodus, dissemination of extremist ideas and loss of hope, particularly among the youth who will have no choice but to join extremist and terrorist groups. All this because of a colonizing State which the whole world acknowledges does not belong to the Arab environment

either culturally, ideologically or linguistically. It should be recalled that this is the only region in the world that shares the same language, culture and identity.

II. THE CURRENT SITUATION AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

5. The most important outstanding issues between the Palestinians and the Israelis include the peace process and the negotiations on contentious issues, among which the systematic pursuit of settlements, which are widely denounced internationally because they are a threat to the peace process and prevent the creation of a viable Palestinian State.

6. The world is waiting for the outcome of the French initiative calling for an expanded international conference, with the presence of the leading countries in the Middle East to end the breakdown between the two parties and once again revive the peace process. France has threatened to recognize Palestine in the event of Israeli refusal to sit down with the Palestinian Authority, which has approved the French initiative.

7. It seems that international positions are still conflicting on the prospects of achieving peace through the French initiative. The position of the United States will not be clear before the elections, and Russia seems to be in favour of the principle of dialogue, while the Arab region countries, preoccupied by the more serious conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Iraq as well as Iranian threats in the region, have not formulated a collective position although they agree on the constant issues of the Palestinian cause, namely, the establishment of a Palestinian State on the 1967 territories and support for the Arab peace initiative, the two-State solution, the rights of returning refugees and the cessation of settlements.

8. On 21 June 2016, the Council of Ministers took the decision to hold local elections throughout the country on 8 October 2016. Elections were planned to be held in 416 local councils in the West Bank, including the Jerusalem Governorate.

9. The Electoral Commission prepared for the elections in the West Bank and Gaza, and closed both the voter registration and candidate nomination periods. There were 4864 lists from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, on 8 September 2016 the Commission received the decision of the Supreme Court of Justice in Ramallah stipulating a provisional halt to the decision of the Council of Ministers to hold local elections, pending the outcome of the case before it. At its 3 October session, the Palestinian Supreme Court decided to continue the elections in the West Bank and to annul those in the Gaza Strip taking into account the absence of a legitimate justice system constituted in accordance with the constitution and the other relevant laws.

10. In a letter addressed to President Mahmoud Abbas, the Commission also recommended that the local elections should be postponed for a period of six months in order to restore order in Palestinian affairs. Following the decision by the Council of Ministers to delay the holding of local elections in all the Governorates in order to preserve unity in the homeland, the Commission considers that this decision is

consistent with its recommendations to temporarily postpone the entire process, rather than holding elections solely in the West Bank, which would deepen the division between the two parts of the country to the detriment of the general interest of the Palestinian people.

III. THE SITUATION IN JERUSALEM

11. The policy of the occupation of Al-Quds and the invasion of the Palestinian population adopted by the Israeli Government following the occupation of the Eastern part of the city in 1967, is aimed essentially at placing the management of the city's Islamic and Christian holy sites in the hands of the Waqf Al Quds Authority, under Israeli sovereignty, and calling for cohabitation under the occupation by giving the Palestinian areas relative specificity.

12. The policy of occupation of the city of Al Quds is the result of a greater perception by the colonizing State of the sensitive position and role of the holy city for Arabs, Muslims and Christians in general. Furthermore, initially Israel had hoped to assert and legitimize the annexation and unification of Al Quds, and present itself as a country capable of guaranteeing freedom of worship and catering for the holy places of all religions. However, this in no way reflects benevolence, lack of ambition or Talmudic intentions on the part of the occupying powers. The *status quo* in Al Quds during the first years of the occupation, was due to political and security conditions, as well as the balance of power during that period.

13. However, the actual policy adopted by Israel was a constantly changing status aimed at establishing a new *status quo* that would strengthen the Jewish character and identity of the city, to the detriment of its Palestinian, Islamic and Christian character. The policy was adopted in order to bring about a slow and cumulative change, marked by continuity and comprehensiveness, with the anticipation of the general mood and prevailing circumstances as well as current sensitivities.

14. Although the strengthening of Jewish political and religious sovereignty over the holy city was and is still the subject of a consensus by various government coalitions, it was influenced at tactical level by the ruling party. The governments led by the "Likud" are characterized by an increase in acts of provocation.

15. Operations encouraging judaization and the confiscation of buildings, expropriation of land, digging of tunnels and the construction of new settlements, incursions into Al Aqsa Mosque, and police brutality towards the people as well as the escalation of vindictive municipal procedures against the people have reached a peak in recent times. The operations are supported by Israeli consensus, since 46% of the Israelis say that Netanyahu is quite right to build everywhere in East Al Quds, and 28% say that he is right in principle, but should pick the appropriate time. Therefore, 74% support in principle the settlement and construction in all districts of Al Quds, but disagree in terms of picking an appropriate time.

16. This flurry to take control of and divide the holy city has affected the ministers and members of the Knesset, as well as all partisan, political and cultural components, of which Netanyahu is the real leader and main instigator.

17. The assimilation of Al Quds continues actively on a daily basis, and it is only a matter of time before it is swallowed up. It would appear that the damage done to the Palestinian and Islamic identity of Jerusalem and its future have unfortunately, become irreversible in the future perspective, and in the light of present day tools for confrontation and possible solutions. The occupying State is hardly concerned by the different modest forms of resistance, whether in the field or in the official Palestinian or Arab plan, despite the bravery and temerity of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in their resistance to Zionist attacks against their city.

18. It has become necessary for the Palestinians as well as other Arabs states, to review their policies, experiences and performances which to date have failed, and redefine their plans and strategies so that Jerusalem has a central role in their life and they can address the threats to the holy city.

19. Among the most important international resolutions taken recently is the UNESCO Resolution, which obtained 24 votes in favour, only 6 against, and 26 abstentions. The Resolution stipulates that Al-Aqsa Mosque is a Muslim holy site of worship, and also confirms the need to allow Christians and Muslims free and unhindered access to their places of worship in the Old City, and restore the Islamic sites to the original state they were in before 2000, under Jordanian authority.

20. Then there is the UN Security Council Resolution, unanimously voted on 23 December 2016, calling for an end to Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory. For the first time in 36 years, 14 members of the Security Council adopted the Resolution, while only the United States of America abstained from voting. Senegal, Venezuela, Malaysia and New Zealand requested that the Council vote in favour of the draft resolution. The Resolution reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of a two-State solution and a comprehensive, just and durable peace. The Resolution is a positive step that will correct the international process on the Palestinian issue and revive hope for a two-State solution, particularly since the initiative of France for the convening of an International Peace Conference on 15 January 2017 will be based, among other things, on the UN Security Council Resolution on colonization. The timing of the Conference will provide an opportunity to mobilize broad international support for the two-State solution before the inauguration of the new US Administration, which could reverse the international situation in favour of Israel.

IV. THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

21. The government of Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu continues to violate the international norms and standards by increasing the pace of illegal settlements.

22. Israel's policy of building settlements in occupied territories is one of the core driving factors for the conflict. Illegal under international law, settlements are built on confiscated or stolen Palestinian land. They are one of the core justifications for the building of the wall and the restriction of Palestinian movement within the West Bank. They have contributed to forced displacement. They have severely limited Palestinian access to basic resources including land and water. They have also perpetuated a system of segregation and legal and structural inequality between Palestinians and Israelis.

23. In 1993 when the Oslo accords were signed there were approximately 110,000 Israeli settlers living in the West Bank and 146,000 living in East Jerusalem. In 2013 there were approximately 350,000 Israeli settlers living in the West Bank and as many as 300,000 living in East Jerusalem.

24. The international community officially opposes Israel's continued settlement policy and is cognizant of the illegality of all Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. However, the international community has taken minimal and timid steps to pressure Israel to stop building and expanding settlements.

25. The Israeli Government continues to increase the colonial settlements in order to influence the political solutions. Therefore, the the existence of these colonial settlements does not allow for achieving a fair and just political solutions

26. In this regard, the State of Palestine appreciates the decision taken by the South African government in August 2012 , which requires to put a commercial label distinguishes the products made by colonial settlements built on the occupied Palestinian territories.

V. THE APARTHEID WALL

27. These protective walls have reached their ultimate absurdity in the wake of the last military operation against Gaza. Now they are erected around kindergartens located in the vicinity of Gaza. Private homes, schools and bus stops in the area are likewise fortified. Furthermore, Israel has created a virtual protective dome over its skies (the Iron Dome) and now is attempting to invent an anti-tunnel warning system.

28. The Government of Israel continues with its illegal efforts to confiscate the Palestinian lands and properties in order to expand the Apartheid Wall against the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice dated 09 July 2001 as well as the relevant UN General Assembly Resolution in September 2004. It is worth noting that the Wall has turned the West Bank into a confined area and introduced a policy of racism against the Palestinian people.

29. In 2004 the International Court of Justice at The Hague sided with the Palestinians, ruling the wall illegal and ordering Israel to demolish it. Nevertheless, the

wall remains and, as if to rub salt into the oozing wound, the fascist Israeli regime is even expanding the apartheid wall.

30. The Wall has destroyed a large amount of Palestinian farmland and usurped water supplies, including the biggest aquifer in the West Bank. 78 Palestinian villages and communities with a total population of 266,442 will be isolated. The Apartheid Wall's "buffer zone" paves the way for large-scale demolitions and the expulsion of nearby residents, as in many places the Wall is located just meters away from homes, shops, and schools. The land between the Apartheid Wall and the Green Line has been declared a "seam zone", and all residents and landowners in this area must obtain a permit to remain in their homes and on their lands.

VI. THE PALESTINIAN PRISONERS AND DETAINEES

31. Approximately 8,000 prisoners, including 20 women and 230 minors, are languishing in over 22 Israeli prisons and jails under difficult and harsh conditions. More than 1,000 of the prisoners suffer from various diseases. 180 of them suffer from chronic and serious diseases such as cancer, paralysis, heart disease and consequently require permanent care. Many of the detainees are detained without charges or trials under the so-called "Administrative arrest".

32. On Monday, 3 October 2016, institutions responsible for detainee affairs revealed that during the month of September 2016, the occupation forces arrested 436 citizens in the West Bank and Gaza, including 73 children and 11 women, of whom three were girls.

33. The report shows that there are 7000 detainees in Israeli prisons, including 59 women, of whom 12 underage girls, while about 350 children are languishing in the "Megiddo" and "Ofar" prisons. The number of administrative detainees has reached 700. In September alone, 122 administrative detention orders, of which 44 new ones, were issued.

34. Regarding the hunger strikes in September, the report pointed out that the two detained brothers Mohammed and Mahmoud Al Balbul and the detainee Malik Kadi had gone on a hunger strike that lasted more than seventy days to protest against the administrative detention decisions issued against them and suspended their strike on 22 September, after reaching an agreement for the immediate release of the detainee Kadi and his transfer to a Palestinian hospital, while the two Al Balbul brothers will be released on 8 December 2016, as a result of popular and legal pressures and the political efforts of the Palestinian leadership.

35. **35.** Two detainees Anas Shedid and Ahmed Abu Fara from Hebron announced in September that they had begun a hunger strike to protest against the administrative detention policy, while two other detainees, Jawad Jawarish and Maher Abayat from the city of Bethlehem, announced a hunger strike to protest against the policy of isolation and displacement between prisons.

36. **36.** The report states that the popular outburst began on 1 October 2016, coincided with the repeated attacks by the occupying force against the Al-Aqsa holy mosque. These events have clearly impacted on the issue of detainees and the increase in the number of daily arrests since last year. The arrests affected all Palestinian age groups and social categories, including children, women and men. At least 7955 Palestinians were also detained, including 1963 children and 229 women and girls, as well as five members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and 41 journalists.

VII. THE CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

37. Israel, the occupying Power, continues its repeated and multiple forms of violations on the Palestinian people's rights by committing acts that are life-threatening. They are destroying economy, preventing development, and contributing to environmental degradation. They are confiscating lands and increasing. They have accelerated the illegal settlements on the Palestinian territory. They have imposed a siege and obstructed Palestinians movement because of the barriers and obstacles on the roads.

38. In the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation, social, economic and security situation is going towards disaster as a result of the siege for a long time, more than 9 years, and impose severe restrictions on economic activity and the freedom of movement of citizens. This blockade and restrictions have exacerbated poverty and despair among the Palestinian civilian population, in addition to deep adverse impact and consequences of the Israeli military operations that have taken place in the period between December 2008 and January 2009 and November 2012 and July 2014. The actual situation in the Gaza Strip becomes catastrophic and unbearable and threatens to form a humanitarian disaster. The Gaza strip population is entirely dependent on foreign humanitarian aid. They are also suffering various types of diseases due to lack of medicines and the difficulties they face in dealing with serious emergency cases who require urgent transfer to hospitals outside the Gaza Strip.

39. The Israeli policy of imposing multiple forms of harassment aims to obstruct the process of development in the occupied Palestinian territories, and to strengthen the link of the Palestinian economy to the Israeli economy. Thus, Israel continues its policy of destruction of the productive capacity of the Palestinian national authority in the farms and factories, and the confiscating of land and destroying crops, and at the same time intensifying the blockade and isolation and control points, and prevent the establishment of large-scale projects, which negatively affects the Palestinian Authority's efforts in the implementation of its program to establish sophisticated institutional infrastructure capable of administration of Palestinian independent state. Thus, the fate of the Palestinians remains dependent first and foremost with the help of the international community.

40. As Israel deepens its actions to weaken the Palestinian economy, by continued prevention and harassment of Palestinian investments in the Palestinian territories classified areas (C) under Israeli security control. Furthermore, stealing the Palestinian

underground water, and allocating it to the settlements established in the Palestinian territories, and the release of the sewage of these settlements on Palestinian crops aiming to destroy them. As well as the capture of Palestinian natural resources by stealing oil field in the Salfit area, and gas fields opposite to the shores of the Gaza Strip, and within the limits of Palestinian territorial waters.

41. Under this critical situation, the International Community and in particular the Security Council and the United Nations Organization and the Quartet, shall not continue their silence towards these Israeli actions represented by the confiscation of the lands and the expulsion and displacement of the Palestinian people, and must take effective action to compel Israel to respect international legitimacy decisions and relative agreements to put an end to all acts of attacks to the Palestinian territories.

VIII. Conclusion

42. In its handling of the Palestinian question, Israel has adopted a policy of imposing the status quo and violating international legality as well as international human rights law and humanitarian law. The Netanyahu government relies on the Zionist State's historical alliances and their power, within the Security Council, to veto any measures deemed as a threat to Israel's authority or as eroding its right to existence in the Palestinian territories, within the scope of an Arab world that lies at the very opposite end of the Jewish culture in all dimensions and components, the most important of which are language and religion in this region. Consequently, Israel strives to isolate the Palestinian Authority in order to impose its conditions on the Palestinian government, with no supervision or international obligations in the presence of international partners, for fear of discrediting the state of occupation and making it appear as contravening international law and being outside international law, which will severely affect Israel's reputation, especially within the European and international opinion.

43. Palestine, on the other hand, relies on international alliances forged through membership of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as on uncovering Israeli injustices and practices against Palestinian citizens and against the two-state solution. These injustices include modifying the demographic structure of the city of Jerusalem, building settlements around East Jerusalem, persistently executing repressive measures against the population and making illegal arrests as part of what it refers to as administrative detention, and the enduring harassment of Muslims and Christians, in a bid to prevent them from performing their rites of worship at the holy places.

44. Palestinian diplomacy has succeeded in gaining access to institutions within the international community through membership in the United Nations General Assembly and UNESCO, which has given them the opportunity to legally meet with Member States and to promote Palestinian rights and even persuade a majority of these organizations to support actions in favour of Palestinian rights and to vote for Palestine on many occasions, the most important of which was the vote by UNESCO recently.

45. The positions held by the major powers on the Palestinian question vary, particularly by those powers with influence over the Security Council and which have played historical roles in the establishment of the State of Israel. However, current Israeli State practices have become a source of embarrassment for these countries vis-à-vis their citizens, in particular, as there has been increased awareness in respect of fundamental human rights and increased speed at which information is transmitted through social media and by television networks, in addition to the impact of the positions adopted by these countries on Western voters, and the different positions held by right-wing parties on the notion of occupation, coupled with support for people's right to freedom and democracy, which has produced splits within the ranks of Western States on the issue of the establishment of a repressive State that fails to respect international legality and which seeks to operate outside international law.

46. This situation has led to the recognition, by many Western countries, of the State of Palestine in recent years and to support in favour of raising the Palestinian flag at the General Assembly of the United Nations, as well as to support for them within international institutions. But the position of the United States on the two-state solution is still ambiguous, with its recognition of Israel as part of the solution but failure to formally recognize the other state which it proposes to establish in its bid to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict, namely a Palestinian State within the 4 July 1967 borders and its capital in East Jerusalem.

47. Settlements and their extension still constitute the primary obstacle to the return by the two parties to negotiations, as Israel has failed to display any degree of flexibility in slowing down the construction of settlements, rather, the pace has even accelerated with new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as around East Jerusalem, with the goal of making demographic changes in Jerusalem. The international call to boycott Israeli products from settlements is still in force, as a means of exerting international pressure to stem the expansion of settlements in Palestinian territories.

48. The greatest challenge to the Palestinian question remains the acute internal division between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which caused a postponement of the last elections and were perhaps the best solution to end the division, through a national unity government representative of all Palestinians, and thereby strengthening the Palestinian negotiating position with Israel and the international community.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

49. Reaffirm our support for a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian question through the agreed negotiating mechanisms and in accordance with the principles of international law and international humanitarian law as well as all previous AU decisions and relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

50. Call for the revival of the peace process to achieve a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East and also support all initiatives aimed at bringing peace

to the region, in particular, the Arab peace initiative, and more recently, the French initiative to organize an international conference for peace before the end of 2016, aimed at ending the Israeli occupation and which will follow a fixed schedule and new international mechanisms.

51. Call on Palestinian factions to come together and promote values of national reconciliation in order to reach unified negotiating positions that could attract regional and international support, as a means of forcing the Israeli side to accept Palestinian conditions that are buttressed by the international legality embodied by the two-state solution. To this end, the AU is encouraged by the recent agreement of the Palestinian factions in Moscow on the idea of a government of national unity in Palestine.

52. Condemn the continued detention of thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, and wish to work with the international community to pressure Israel into complying with its obligations under international law, in particular, the Geneva Convention on the rights of detainees and prisoners, and also call for the immediate release of all Palestinians who are languishing in Israeli prisons.

53. Emphasise our strong support for efforts by the State of Palestine to mobilize international support in favour of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and call upon the Security Council to issue a recommendation to support the Palestinian State's request for full membership in the United Nations.

54. Reaffirm the need to continue the ongoing Arab-African coordination in international forums and to maintain unified positions on the Palestinian question.

**DRAFT DECLARATION
ON THE SITUATION IN PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, having met at our Twenty Eighth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 to 31 January 2017;

Taking Note of the Report on the Situation in the Middle East and Palestine, and **Recalling** all resolutions and decisions of the Organization of African Unity/African Union on the Situation in Palestine towards achieving lasting peace and security in the Middle East;

Reaffirming our full support to the Palestinian people and the State of Palestine under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas in their quest for the restoration of their legitimate right to establish an independent state co-existing peacefully with the State of Israel and **Commending** the recent reconciliation deal reached on 15 January 2017 in the Russian capital Moscow, between Palestinians Organizations to form a unity government;

Reiterating our wish for the peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the principles of international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions to ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the borders of June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital;

Renewing our call for the resumption of negotiations between the two sides in order to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East;

Re-Reaffirming our full support to all initiatives aimed at bringing peace to the region in particular the Arab Peace Initiative and the French initiative of holding international peace conference aimed at re-launching negotiations to solve the Palestine-Israeli conflict on specific timeframe;

Condemning the illegal settlements in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and in the occupied territory of the Syrian Golan Heights and the continued occupation of Palestinian lands and the Judaization campaign aimed at changing all Islamic and Christian features of the Holy City and reducing the Palestinian population to the fullest extent through the confiscation of their lands and the destruction of their homes and all measures of collective punishment;

Denouncing the Israeli practices against the Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including women and children, which are contrary to the international law and international humanitarian law;

Calling on the Israeli government to release all Palestinian and Arab political prisoners and detainees in the Israeli jails immediately and unconditionally.

Equally Demanding that Israel refrains from using acts of terrorism against civilian populations as well as arbitrary arrests of Palestinians including children and women which is an act of violation of international laws and human rights norms including the Geneva Convention on the Rights of Women and Children;

WE HEREBY:

1. **DEMAND** the International Community to find an ever-lasting solution for the Arab-Israeli Conflict based on the relevant international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative;
2. **CALL ON** the international community to exert pressure on Israel to stop all settlement activities, release Palestinian and Arab Political prisoners in Israeli jails and support the efforts of the Palestinians for membership in international agencies and to join international conventions and protocols;
3. **FURTHER CALL ON** members of the international community to refrain from transferring embassies and diplomatic missions accredited to Israel from Tel Aviv to the city of Jerusalem, in order to achieve the foundation of peace based on a two-state solution;
4. **SUPPORT** the outcomes of the International Peace Conference based on the French Initiative and Call for the launching of serious negotiations to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the two-state solution;
5. **REJECT** the illegal settlements by the Israeli occupation and **HIGHLY COMMEND** the position of the UN Security Council in its resolution 2334 of 24 December 2016, which emphasizes the illegality of the settlements built in flagrant violation of international law;
6. **CONDEMN** the land and sea blockage imposed on the Gaza Strip, which has led to the deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation, and **DEMANDS** an immediate lifting of all restrictions on the Gaza Strip;
7. **REQUEST** the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security, by taking the necessary steps to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects, to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region based on the principle of a two-state solution, according to the 1967 borders, and apply the provisions of relevant international law and its previous decisions in this regard;
8. **URGE** Member States to boycott goods and products that are produced and exported from the settlements built on the occupied Palestinian territories including East Jerusalem;
9. **REQUEST** the United Nations and the Quartet to intervene decisively with a view to pressure Israel to commit to the process of serious peace negotiations;

10. **FURTHER REQUEST** Member States to continue to support the Palestinian people in their struggle to establish a sovereign state over its national territory with Quds El-Sharif (Jerusalem) as its capital;
11. **REAFFIRM** the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own Palestinian Independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital on its borders of June 1967, and supports the Palestinian approach to obtain full membership of the State of Palestine at the United Nations;
12. **REITERATE** that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, demands a full withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories to the line of June 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights and territories still occupied in southern Lebanon.
13. **WELCOME** the UNESCO resolution of 26 October 2016 on the conservation of the current status of the Old City of Jerusalem and **CALL ON** all stakeholders to respect this resolution.

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