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**REPORT ON PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST FOR THE  
JULY 2017 TO JANUARY 2018 PERIOD**

## REPORT ON PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST FOR THE JULY 2017 TO JANUARY 2018 PERIOD

### I. Introduction

1. On the occasion of this Summit, the African Union reaffirms its commitment to solidarity with the Palestinian people in their right to regain their freedom and establish their independent State, and considers a just and comprehensive peace as the strategic option to put an end to Israeli occupation of all Palestinian and Arab territories occupied within 4 June 1967 borders, and allow the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate national rights so that Palestine regains its right to exist as a strategic state in a region where a great part of human history was written, and which is the cradle of the prophets and religions as well as civilizations that the world has a duty to preserve.

2. The African Union calls on the international community to assume its responsibilities regarding the Palestinian question and the implementation of the resolutions of international bodies taken since 1948 to date, in order to prevail upon the colonizing State to comply with international law and will, in a region experiencing armed confrontations and conflicts, that could erase its identity, change its cultural and demographic paradigm, fragment its states and threaten international peace and security with mass exodus and the spread of extremist ideas, and the loss of hope, particularly among the young people who will have no alternative but to join extremist and terrorist groups. All this is as a result of the colonizing State, which the entire world recognizes as not being culturally, linguistically or ideologically part of the Arab environment. It should be recalled that this is the only region in the world that shares the same language, culture and identity.

3. It follows the situation in Palestine closely and monitors all abuses and arbitrary practices against Palestinians by the occupying forces. The Palestinian people are under siege, daily harassment and humiliating treatment at Israeli checkpoints, systematic confiscation of land in favour of Israel's expansionist settlement plan to break up the State of Palestinian into non-contiguous districts and the displacement of citizens of the East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley areas of as part of the ethnic cleansing policy pursued by the Israel, the occupying State, in order to achieve the complete separation of the Palestinian population in ethnic housing complexes.

4. In addition to these practices there is the policy of isolating Jerusalem from its Arab environment through the plan for its definitive separation with the racial segregation wall and the annexation of land, and the completion of the construction of the separation wall from the south of the city of Jenin, and west of the city of Bethlehem

to Beit Jala, northwest and south of Hebron, around the city of Ramallah, to separate them from the Beit El settlement. Because of these constructions, the Palestinian people now live in a *de facto* apartheid situation, as a result of the official Israeli position of requesting Palestinian recognition of the Jewishness of the State of Israel, based on racial and ethnic grounds that reject the existence of non-Jews. In this context, separate systems would be applied for Jews and for Palestinians living under Jewish occupation, thus continuing racial discrimination. This cannot be overlooked as it constitutes a violation of international law and international humanitarian law, and cannot be accepted by the international community. The persistence of this situation raises ethical questions about the international value system.

5. Furthermore, the African Union notes with great concern, the policies and measures of the Israeli Government, and its uncompromising positions in rejecting the two-State solution in compliance with international law, peace initiatives and previous decisions of the Union. In addition are the provocative Israeli practices and the encouragement of settler groups in their continued attacks on Palestinians, their property and their holy places, particularly in the city of Jerusalem, which could fuel and increase the incidence of violence. At the same time, the Union, takes note of the Palestinian Leadership's commitment to the option of peace as a strategic choice in accordance with the resolutions and declarations of international law, the rejection of violence and adoption of peaceful resistance and the diplomatic approach aimed at a fair solution that will guarantee the national rights of the Palestinian people. The Union condemns the violence committed by the Israeli occupation army, which constitutes an act of state terrorism against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy places.

6. Faced with the status quo in which Israel refuses to start the political process in conformity with the rules of international legality, by gaining time to double the settlements in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, confiscates Palestinian land and property, and Judaizes Islamic and Christian holy places in the city of East Jerusalem, as well as displacing indigenous peoples, confiscating their property, and resettling Jews in the city to create a demographic reality in their favour, in an attempt by the Israeli Government to impose a *de facto* policy to prevent the implementation of the two-State solution, the international community and stakeholders are called upon to take decisive action, and request the UN Security Council to play its role in ensuring peace and stability in Palestine by calling upon Israel to start negotiations, in compliance with the rules of international legality and the Arab Peace Initiative, within a specific timeframe, which would lead to the two-State solution and the demarcation of borders based on the 1967 borders.

## **II. Situation in Occupied Jerusalem and Settlements:**

7. The Israeli Government continues its policy of imposing the occupation *status quo* in East Jerusalem, refusing to respect the historical and legal status of Islamic and Christian holy places in the city, which could give rise to feelings of religious hostility. Since the occupation of Jerusalem, the Israeli Government has unilaterally annexed it. That has been rejected by the entire world, including the UN Security Council. Jerusalem is an occupied city and Israel's decisions and procedures are null and void, and totally illegal. The same applies for the Israeli settlements in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Palestinian territories. What Israelis doing to change the historical and legal status of Jerusalem, particularly threats to the status of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, is an attack on religious coexistence in the city, for which it will bear sole responsibility for the consequences.

8. The Israeli occupation has intensified its Judaization and security campaign against Jerusalem and its inhabitants since July 2017, and has been working from day one to implement a number of Judaization projects and security measures, and policing the inhabitants of Jerusalem. These led to the outbreak of an Intifada in Al-Quds on 14 July, and protests against new occupation measures in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, following the commando operation led by three young men in the vicinity of the Mosque. The action changed the situation in favour of the inhabitants protesting in the streets of Jerusalem, forcing the occupation forces to temporarily cease, and then resume its campaigns of collective and individual arrests. After two weeks of massive protests in the streets of Jerusalem and at the gates of Al-Aqsa, the Israeli occupation forces were forced to return to the situation that existed before the Al-Aqsa operation on 14 July 2017.

9. On the ground, the Israeli occupying forces demolished 15 houses and installations in the occupied city of Jerusalem in the month of July, and forced a citizen of Al Quds to demolish his house in the village of Umm Lisoan south of the city of Jerusalem, after giving him a choice between demolishing it himself or having them do so with their bulldozers. In the settlements, the District Committee approved a project to build 900 housing units in occupied Jerusalem spread over several settlements, including 355 units in the Gilo settlement, and 166 in the Pisgat Zeev settlement. Israeli authorities have also begun to build 2,600 settlement units in the occupied Jerusalem settlement of Givat Hamtus, which had been decided on since 2014, in order to separate occupied southern Jerusalem from its Palestinian environment and facilitate the plan for isolation and encirclement of Jerusalem's

neighbourhoods. The occupying power wants to annex the settlements according to the plan for the isolation Jerusalem from its Palestinian hinterland.

**10.** The Occupation authorities published a call for tenders for a large-scale development project in the Jabal al-Mukaber area, east of occupied Jerusalem, for the construction of 1330 hotel units. The Israeli occupation authorities are working on a huge settlement project to move an additional 150,000 Jewish settlers to the occupied city of Jerusalem with and expel 100,000 inhabitants to reduce the number of Arabs and increase the number of Jews by annexing settlements built in the West Bank territory and excluding Arab areas from the city's municipality, so as to reverse the demographic balance in favour of the Jews within the eternal city of Jerusalem.

**11.** The settlement policy in occupied Jerusalem and the rest of the Palestinian territories follows a specific approach of isolating Palestinian cities from one another, thus making it impossible to establish a contiguous Palestinian State. In contrast, the settlements built in the Palestinian occupied territories in 1967 are linked to each other and to Israel by their own road networks, which Palestinians are not allowed to use in the Israeli controlled Palestinian territories classified as Area C, within the framework of the plan approved by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the last period, to finance the project with a quarter of a billion dollars. The project publicly endorses the political apartheid carried out by the Israeli occupying power against the Palestinian people.

**12.** Expressing the rejection of the occupation policy in the occupied city of Jerusalem during the first Friday of July (7/7), tens of thousands of worshipers from various Palestinian sectors prayed in the Al-Aqsa Mosque before it was closed by the occupying forces on the second Friday (14/7), following a commando operation (mentioned above) in the vicinity of the Mosque. Despite the opening of the Holy Mosque on 16/7, the inhabitants of Jerusalem refused to enter because of new security measures established by the Israeli occupying forces at the gates of Al-Aqsa, including electronic doors and high-resolution surveillance cameras. The Jerusalemites continued their protests rejecting the actions of the occupying powers until 27/7 when they forced the latter to withdraw in the face of their strong resistance. During the first Friday prayer of 28 July, after it had been closed for two weeks, about 300,000 worshipers from various Palestinian areas prayed at the Mosque. That Friday was called "Friday of Victory".

**13.** The occupying forces arrested hundreds of worshipers during the disturbances in Al-Aqsa, who were observing a sit-in at the gates of the Holy Mosque in the midst of violent attacks on the faithful in the streets, injuring hundreds, including Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, the preacher at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, who sustained injuries to his feet while

officiating the evening prayer, with the protesters at the gates of Al-Aqsa on 18/7. Israeli occupying forces detained around 120 worshipers who retreated into Al-Aqsa on 28/7 during a huge assault at midnight on the first Friday before the reopening of the mosque, and wounded dozens of worshipers, including 15 people and 6 medical staff who sustained injuries to their heads from rubber bullets.

**14.** The closing of the Al-Aqsa Mosque inflamed the feelings of Palestinians in occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as in the Gaza Strip and in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948, which triggered clashes in various Palestinian areas and villages, and on the borders of the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of July, 18 Palestinians, including 4 Jerusalem inhabitants died like martyrs, bringing the total number of Palestinian martyrs from different areas this year to 63. The month of July also recorded the martyrdom of 5 Palestinian children, bringing the number of child martyrs to 15 since the beginning of this year. The occupying authorities continue to detain the bodies of 13 martyrs in their mortuaries since the beginning of the Intifada in Jerusalem on 1 October 2015.

**15.** Israeli occupying forces detained about 650 Palestinians, including 486 inhabitants of Jerusalem, in individual and collective arrests, particularly during the crackdown on angry demonstrators who rejected occupying measures in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestinian households, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein and the Chairman of the Committee of Families of Detainees in Jerusalem, Amjad Abu Assab and the Leader on the Al-Quds dossier in the Fatah Movement, Hatem Abdel Kader, were arrested during the crackdown on protesters in Jerusalem. About 1,400 Palestinians from different Palestinian areas were also injured by Israeli occupying forces during the uprising at the gates of Al-Aqsa, with the aim of deterring Palestinians in all Palestinian territories.

**16.** The policy of the Israeli occupying force in Al-Quds continues to be characterized by the prevalence of the *status quo* which reinforces the Jewish character and identity of the city at the expense of its Palestinian, Islamic and Christian character. The policy was adopted with a view to effecting a cumulative and slow change characterized by the continuous total exploitation of the situation prevailing in the region, which faces other problems, thereby isolating the defenceless Palestinian people and implement a racist agenda.

**17.** In an attempt by Israel to successfully carry out its projects of Judaization of the Holy City and to establish a new unilateral reality that would be imposed as the final solution, it confiscated land from their Jerusalemite owners, as part of implementing of the Absentee Landlord Act, demolished houses, built settlements around the Holy City

on the lands of Palestinian citizens, and moved Israeli settlers to the occupied Palestinian territories in East Jerusalem, forcefully expelled Palestinian families from their homes and demolished houses as a punitive measure, as well as under the pretext of lack of building permits and, cancelled residence permits for Jerusalemites, harassing them in their daily lives and livelihoods, forced them to leave their homes and their property, and migrate from the Holy City through a series of concerted actions aimed at changing the demographic, humanitarian character and civilization of the Holy City.

**18.** On 6 December 2017, the US President released a decision stating that he would recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, contrary to the rules of international law and international humanitarian law as well as the Security Council resolutions and the decisions of the African Union, which consider Jerusalem an occupied city, such as the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. Security Council Resolution 476 of 1980 rejected the Israeli decision to annex the city of Jerusalem: Resolution 478 of 1980 reaffirmed the refusal to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and called on countries not to transfer their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem. Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967 considered Jerusalem to be part of the Palestinian territories. Resolution 2334 of 2016 highlighted the illegality of settlements and called for the cessation of all settlement activities in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem.

**19.** The US decision has moved beyond the outcome of the peace talks initiated between the two parties in 1991, where Jerusalem featured in negotiations on final status issues, and is beyond the message of assurances given by the United States to the official Palestinian Authority in 2000, in which it underscored the fact that Jerusalem was part of its territory in 1967. Based on the assurances, a roadmap was drafted by the US Administration to handle the negotiations between the parties. Israel had also previously negotiated over the city of Jerusalem at the Camp David Conference with the Palestinian Leadership, Israel recognizing it was an occupying State and that East Jerusalem was part of the occupied Palestinian Territory.

**20.** To regard Jerusalem as the capital of Israel constitutes absolute discrimination from the Israeli side at the expense of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and a flagrant violation of the international consensus on the Palestinian issue, which calls for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in conformity with the rules of international legality, whereby the territories occupied in 1967 are a Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. With that decision, the US president gave what he did not own to those who had no right to it, just as was the case a hundred years ago in the decision of the infamous Balfour Declaration. After hundred years, the US Administration repeated the same historic injustice against the Palestinian people.

**21.** The decision affects the peace process, the attack on Jerusalem, and the Islamic and Christian sanctuaries is a source of anger for the Muslim world, as well as the Palestinian people, and could transform the political conflict into a religious one. This calls for the United Nations and countries of the world to reject this unfair US decision, and work urgently towards rescinding it in order to maintain the possibility of implementing a two-State solution, thereby preserving international peace and security.

**22.** The international community should ensure the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 of 2016, which reaffirms that Israeli settlements constitute a flagrant violation under international law, and a major obstacle to peace, and therefore demands that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, as well as not opening/transferring any diplomatic missions to Jerusalem. The international community should also not recognize any changes to the June 1967 borders, with the exception of the changes agreed on by both parties through the negotiations.

### **III. Palestinian Reconciliation, Egyptian Efforts and Current Situation**

**23.** Egyptian efforts led by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi for inter-Palestinian reconciliation have been successful, after the announcement by Hamas on 18 September 2017 of its decision to accept reconciliation with Fatah. Following intensive negotiations in Cairo which lasted for about three months, the Palestinian parties agreed to dissolve the administrative government of the Hamas Movement in the Gaza Strip and hand over the Gaza Strip and crossing points to the Government of Mahmoud Abbas after in-depth discussions involving many stakeholders, the most important being the people of Gaza, represented by all sectors among youth and the working class, as well as other segments of society. However, the greatest credit goes to the intense and serious efforts of Egypt to achieve reconciliation.

**24.** On 2 October 2017, the Palestinian Cabinet, chaired by Ramy Al Hamdallah, held its weekly meeting in the Gaza Strip and assumed office in the presence of an Egyptian Security Delegation to supervise the first reconciliation meeting between Fatah and Hamas. Since then, the Government has been conducting its business without any problem. Ministerial Committees will be established to receive returnees at crossing points and ministries to handle administrative, legal and civil impacts and consequences of the divisions. At the opening of the session, Al Hamdallah vowed to end the disputes with Hamas, and stated that “the Government will resolve all outstanding issues by consensus and partnership, stressing that achieving reconciliation will stimulate donor countries to fulfil their obligations regarding the reconstruction of Gaza”.



**25.** On 29 September 2017, the Quartet, which is composed of Russia, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations, led by Mr Tony Blair issued a communiqué commending Egyptian efforts aimed at creating enabling conditions for the Palestinian Authorities to assume its responsibilities in Gaza. The Quartet expressed its willingness to engage with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to support the reconciliation process, because ending the Palestinian division would lead to alleviating human suffering in the Gaza Strip by opening the crossing points and launching the process of reconstructing Gaza, which is key to achieving lasting peace. On 25 September 2017, the United Nations Special Envoy to the Middle East, Nikolai Meladnov, paid his first visit to the Gaza Strip, during which he was received by Yahya Sinwar, Chief of the Hamas Bureau. The Special Envoy commended Egyptian efforts in bringing about the reconciliation and the decision by Hamas to end the division. This was the first statement issued by the Quartet in years about the Palestinian Reconciliation, which confirms the powerful international support for the Egyptian efforts towards ending the Palestinian division.

**26.** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected any Palestinian reconciliation without the recognition of Israel and the dissolution of the military wing of Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, and the breaking off of relations with Iran. According to a communiqué issued by Netanyahu's Office, he stated "We expect everyone who talks of a peace process to recognize the State of Israel and, of course, to recognize a Jewish State. He added: "We are not prepared to accept bogus reconciliations in which the Palestinian side apparently reconciles at the expense of our existence".

**27.** For his part, President Donald Trump's Special Representative for International Negotiations, Mr Jason Greenblatt, said that Washington welcomed the efforts aimed at creating favourable conditions for the Palestinian Authorities to fully assume its responsibilities in Gaza, as indicated in the Quartet's communiqué issued on 28 September, adding that the United States would continue to monitor the developments closely, while working with the Palestinian Authorities, Israel and international donors to improve the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

**28.** After a waiting period since the inauguration of President Donald Trump, the White House announced that after conducting an accurate assessment of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United States have cancelled the idea of moving its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. The statement also underscored the United States' assertion that any Palestinian Government must unambiguously and explicitly commit to non-violence, recognition of the State of Israel, accept previous agreements and obligations between the parties, and commit to peaceful negotiations.

**29.** To achieve national reconciliation on the ground and put an end to political divisions, meetings bringing together all Palestinian factions were held in mid-November in the Egyptian capital under the auspices of Egypt. All the factions agreed on the need to take all measures that would enable the Unity Government to take responsibility for the administration of the Gaza Strip as soon as possible. The Palestinian factions also recommended that President Mahmoud Abbas set a date for Presidential, Legislative Council and Palestinian National Council elections after consulting all national and political forces and stakeholders by the end of 2018.

**30.** The factions also agreed to activate and develop the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), pursuant to the 2005 Cairo Declaration, and invite the Development and Activation Committee to meet and include all the factions of national action within the PLO, in the election of the Palestinian National Council, as well as the Committees and Departments of the PLO. The participants agreed to continue their meetings in early February to finalize the practical stages and the mechanisms for resolving all reconciliation issues and activating the coordination of the PLO under the sponsorship and guidance of Egypt at all stages.

**31.** The political situation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is currently frozen and political negotiations have come to a standstill. In the meantime, the US Administration is currently drafting a Comprehensive Peace Initiative for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will be presented to both parties at the end of this year, which the President of the United States of America describes it as “the ultimate deal”. It includes solutions to all fundamental issues ranging from border demarcation and the status of Jerusalem, to refugees.

**32.** The African Union watches the American efforts to restore peace to the Middle East with optimism, and requests of the US Administration that the initiative include fair solutions to all outstanding issues between the parties without fragmentation or postponement, based on relevant international resolutions and references, and culminating in the establishment of two States: an independent Palestinian State within the 4 June 1967 borders, peacefully co-existing with the State of Israel. The Palestinian side has declared, more than once, its readiness to immediately engage in serious negotiations that would determine its fate.

#### **IV. Centenary of the Balfour Declaration**

**33.** The message sent by the British Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1917 to Lord Rothschild, one of the leaders of the Zionist movement at the time, later known as the

Balfour Declaration, was the first step taken by the West to create an entity for the Jews on Palestinian soil. The British Government undertook to establish a Jewish State in Palestine. Since then, it has facilitated immigration of Jews from western countries to Palestine, given them state lands and facilitated the arming of Zionist gangs by the British Representative who administered Palestine during that period, seized Palestinian territories by force in 1948 and declared the establishment of the State of Israel, supported and protected by the United Kingdom.

**34.** On the occasion of the centenary of that Declaration, the Palestinian Administration has called for the recognition by the United Kingdom of the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders as compensation for the Balfour Declaration, which led to the creation of the State of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian people, while Great Britain has not only rejected the Palestinian request, preferring to await a political settlement between the two parties, but has also started to commemorate the anniversary of what is considered among the Palestinians as the Ominous Declaration, by inviting the Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu to London to celebrate the occasion.

**35.** For his part, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, has announced his intention to sue Great Britain before British and international courts if the centenary of the Balfour Declaration is celebrated, an act which is contrary to all international standards and laws. It was a promise made by one who did not own it to one who had no right to it. On that occasion, the Palestinian territories, the Palestinian diaspora and some European capitals with the Arab communities observed great activity among civil society organizations and segments of students and political militants, who organized protests and sent messages to numerous international human rights organizations to protest against the ominous promise.

## **V. Recommendations**

**36.** Support the Palestinian people in their struggle for freedom and establishment of their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, coexisting peacefully with Israel.

**37.** Support a peaceful solution to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieve lasting peace and security in the region, based on the implementation of the decisions of international legality, namely, all the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and in accordance with the principles of international law and the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as decisions of the Organization of African Unity/African Union.

**38.** Call for the resumption of peace negotiations and the establishment of appropriate conditions for that purpose. In that respect, there is a need to reiterate the

call for Israel to put an end to the policy of *fait accompli*, characterized by the continuation of settlement activities in Palestinian territories and the Judaization of Al-Quds by trying to change the demographical balance and destroying the monuments and historical Islamic and Christian landmarks of the city.

**39.** Request all African countries to put an end to any form of direct and indirect dealings with the illegal Israeli system of settlements in the territories of the State of Palestine, and to take all measures to end such dealings as stipulated in the resolutions of international legality, as was done by the international community in the past against the racist regime in South Africa.

**40.** Stress the need to ensure international protection of land and people of the State of Palestine in order to put an end to the occupation and preserve the possibility of a two-State solution pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 605 of 1987 and Resolutions 672 and 673 of 1990, and Resolution 904 of 1994, based on the Geneva International Conventions and reaffirm their applicability in the occupied Palestinian territories.

**41.** Urge Member States of the African Union which have recognized and established relations with the State of Israel to explicitly declare that their recognition is based on the 1967 borders and reiterate their recognition of the State of Palestine within the same borders, in line with the commitment to the resolutions of international legality and the requirements of a political solution based on the resolutions, in order to make the two-State solution possible.

**42.** Once again call on the Israeli occupation authorities to release all detainees and prisoners, particularly children, women, aged persons and the sick, and to put an end to the individual and collective repressive practices against the Palestinian people, which increase their sufferings and breed hatred between the Arab and Israeli populations.

**43.** The African Union welcomes the national reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah and its positive impact to end the division between brothers, and expresses its appreciation for the intense efforts of the Egyptian Government which brought about the reconciliation. It invites the Arab Republic of Egypt to pursue its sponsorship during the stage for the implementation of the terms of the agreement so as to strengthen Palestinian unity and its position for negotiations, contribute to the lifting of the unjust blockade imposed on Gaza, and improve the humanitarian situation of the population.

**44.** Welcomes the coordination between the African Union and the League of Arab States concerning support for the Palestinian cause, and also the initiative of the

League of Arab States to deepen that cooperation and expand the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as part of a tripartite dialogue, which could strengthen international mobilization for the Palestinian cause. Also calls on Member States to maintain their firm position on the issue in international fora.

**45.** The African Union fully supports the position of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States on the celebration organized by the United Kingdom on the occasion of the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, as well as its historical responsibility in the outbreak of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis, and the political and social tragedy of the Palestinian people, and also support the recognition of the State of Palestine within the borders of 4 June 1967.

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

**We**, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting at the Twenty-Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 29 and 30 January 2018:

**Taking note** of the Report on the Situation in Palestine and the Middle East and **Recalling** all previous resolutions and decisions of the Organisation of African Unity/African Union on the situation in Palestine for the maintenance of a lasting peace and security in the Middle East;

**Reaffirming** our total support for the Palestinian people in their just struggle against Israeli occupation, under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas for the restoration of their legitimate right to establish an independent Palestinian State peacefully co-existing with the State of Israel;

**Reaffirming** our willingness to find a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with the principles of international law and all relevant United Nations Resolutions calling for the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital in, in implementation of the principle of the two-State solution and UN Resolution 194 on the return of Palestinian refugees;

**Reiterating** our call for the resumption of negotiations between the two sides with a view to reaching a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, and **Expressing** our support for all initiatives aimed at finding a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within a fixed timeframe;

**Stressing** our strong position in support of the Palestinian cause and the African Union's continued search for a just and comprehensive peace for the Palestinian people and **Hoping** that all Member States deploy efforts for the realization of this endeavour in their international relations. And that any cooperation by the countries of the Continent with the State of Israel should not support the occupying entity at the expense of African support for the Palestinian cause;

**Further reaffirming**, that all settlements built in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights are null and void and illegal, and **Condemning** the policy of land grabbing, demolition of houses and forced displacement of civilians coupled with collective punishment measures;

**Condemning** Israeli practices against Palestinian prisoners and detainees, and **Rejecting** administrative detention and condemning arbitrary measures and sanctions imposed on detainees, particularly children and women in Israeli prisons, which is deprives them of their minimum rights guaranteed by the international human rights

laws and norms on, including the Geneva Convention on the Rights of Women and Children. **Calling upon** in this regard the Israeli Government to release all Palestinian and Arab prisoners detained in Israeli prisons immediately and unconditionally;

**Denouncing** Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territories, the escalation and tension caused by the Israeli Government and Israeli settlers as well as the policy of execution implemented in occupied Palestinian territory against unarmed civilians in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. **Calling on** the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities by providing protection for the unarmed Palestinian people from the oppressive machinery of occupation in implementation of international laws, conventions and treaties in the occupied territories of the Palestinian State.

**HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. **REQUEST** Member States of the Union and **URGE** countries of the world to work towards finding a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the relevant resolutions of international law and the Arab Peace Initiative. While awaiting the American Peace Initiative in the Middle East, and **CALL UPON** the American Administration to include in the Initiative, equitable solutions to all unresolved issues between the two sides without fragmentation or postponement, in conformity with the relevant international resolutions and references, which could lead to the establishment of two States; an independent Palestinian State with the 4 June 1967 borders and the State of Israel, peacefully co-existing;
2. **EXHORT** Member States of the African Union that have recognised and are maintaining relations with the State of Israel to openly declare that their recognition was based on the 1967 borders, and reiterate their recognition of the State of Palestine within the same borders, and refrain from any action that could undermine the basis of the final two-State solution, particularly transfer of embassies or diplomatic missions represented in Israel to the city of Jerusalem which is an occupied Palestinian territory. **CALL UPON** African States those with missions in Israel not to visit the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem except in coordination with the State of Palestine;
3. **URGE** Member States to take into account, in any cooperation with the State of Israel, that such cooperation does not support the Israeli occupation at the expense of African support for the Palestinian cause, in line with the noble ideals and the noble foundation on which the African Union is established, the first of which is the right of people to self-determination;
4. **COMMEND AND WELCOME** the Palestinian reconciliation and the Unity Government Agreement implemented in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and greatly appreciate the efforts of Egypt to achieve this reconciliation, and the monitoring and supervision of its provisions in order to strengthen the unity of Palestinian ranks and its negotiating position, and contribute to relaxing the

unfair Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and the improvement of the humanitarian conditions of its population;

5. **CALL UPON** Member States to support the State of Palestine in their right to become a full-fledged member of the United Nations and support the efforts made by Palestinians to join international agencies and adhere to international conventions and protocols;
6. **REJECT AND CONDEMN** the settlements by the Israeli occupation force in the occupied territories in 1967, including East Jerusalem, and **CALL UPON** the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, to trigger the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2334 of 24 December 2016, which Israel is openly violating by building new settlements and extending those that already exist;
7. **DEPLORE AND DENOUNCE** the Israeli policy aimed at Judaizing the city of Jerusalem and changing its historic, legal and demographic character, continuing attacks against sacred Islamic and Christian sites, the imposition of restrictions and tight control of freedom of worship in the Holy City. **CALL ON** the United Nations Organisation to supervise the implementation of the UNESCO Resolution of 26 October 2016 on Jerusalem and ensure the respect of the full implementation of the said Resolution;
8. **REJECT** the decision of the American Administration published on 6 December 2017, which considers Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and believe that this decision constitutes a major obstacle to the achievement of peace. Jerusalem is one of the last issues in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the negotiations between the parties. 26 years ago;
9. **REAFFIRM** that East Jerusalem within the 4 June 1967 borders is the capital of the Palestinian State, in conformity with the resolutions of international law and the previous decisions of the African Union in this regard. And **AFFIRM** the sanctity of holy Christian and Islamic sites in Jerusalem and the freedom of practise of religious rites;
10. **CALL UPON** all African States to put an end to any form of direct or indirect dealings with the illegal Israeli system of colonisation of territories of the Palestinian State, including East Jerusalem, in conformity with the provisions of Paragraph 5 of UN Security Council Resolution 2334, and to take all measures to end such dealings, as was done by the Organisation of African Unity against the Apartheid Regime in South Africa;
11. The African Union **CONSIDERS** that the following Israeli practices and procedures are the hallmarks of a racist regime that call for the immediate intervention of the international community to put an end to the situation, which



is contrary to international law and international humanitarian law, and undermines international moral values:

- The breaking up of the State of Palestine and its geographical contiguity through the confiscation of land for building settlements and the transformation of Palestinian cities into population centres;
  - The completion of the building of the separation and annexation wall, and the isolation of all Palestinian cities;
  - The linking of settlements constructed by their own road networks and preventing Palestinian citizens from using them;
  - The intransigence of asking Palestinians to recognise the Jewishness of the State of Israel;
  - The difference in the application of regulations and laws to Israeli and Palestinian citizens.
12. **REJECT** the land and sea blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip, causing the deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation there and **REQUEST** that all restrictions imposed on the Gaza Strip be lifted immediately;
  13. **REITERATE** the need to ensure international protection of the land and people of the State of Palestine in order to put an end to the occupation and to preserve the possibility of a two-State solution, in pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 605 (1987), 672 and 673 (1990) and (1994) based on the Geneva Conventions and **REAFFIRM** their applicability to the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967;
  14. **SUPPORT** the Palestinian position in its vision of a final solution to the conflict based on the principle of a two-State solution, while rejecting any fragmented and incomplete solution and provisional temporary State, and refusing to recognise the Jewishness of the State of Israel;
  15. **REITERATE** that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East requires Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories to the June 1967 borders, including the Syrian Golan Heights and territories still under occupation in Southern Lebanon.

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# Report on Palestine and the Middle East for the July 2017 to January 2018 Period

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