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Note verbale dated 15 December 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith a message from Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba requests the Secretary-General to have this message circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 38.



Annex to the note verbale dated 15 December 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Cuban people and Government, I have the honour to address the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This date represents an excellent opportunity to recall the day on which the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), in 1947, on the partition of Palestine. That decision gave rise, one year later, to the tragedy known as the Nakbah, as a result of which more than three quarters of historic Palestine was seized by force, 531 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed and 85 per cent of the population was expelled or displaced. As a result, millions of Palestinian refugees are currently scattered throughout the Middle East.

We strongly support all action aiming to promote a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, which inexorably calls for the actual exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to build their own State within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We also express our firm and decisive support for the admission of Palestine to full membership in the United Nations and its organs, as its legitimate authorities have requested.

On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly adopted, by a large majority, the historic decision to accord to Palestine observer State status in the United Nations. The Security Council must take action and accept without further delay the request for recognition as a State Member of the United Nations submitted by Palestine in 2011, in line with the expressed desire of the great majority of States.

Cuba reaffirms its support for the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and for the Palestinian Authority. We welcome the formation of a Palestinian national unity Government under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas.

The Palestinian people continue to be the victims of aggression by Israel, which occupies their lands, destroys their infrastructure and commits murder. The massacre perpetrated by Israel against the besieged and blockaded Gaza Strip last year caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, wreaking terror, death and massive destruction on that territory.

Many of the promises made for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip have still not materialized. We call upon all members of the international community to fulfil their commitments and to work for the reconstruction of that devastated area.

Israeli military occupation and constant aggression against the Palestinian people, along with the policy of illegal settlements and other colonizing practices, undermine the viability of a Palestinian State within the pre-1967 borders and, therefore, the possibility of resolving the conflict in a just and equitable manner.

The steady deterioration of the political, economic, social and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as a result of the persistent illegal policies and practices of Israel, including grave violations of human rights and

constant war crimes, is of constant concern to Cuba and the other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, requires urgent measures to ensure full respect of international law and international humanitarian law.

Cuba reaffirms its strong condemnation of the continued expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This policy constitutes a grave violation of international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the occupying Power from transferring parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies. The policy also has a serious impact on the Palestinian population in general and, in particular, on the precarious living conditions of the Palestinian refugees registered in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and is contrary to the objectives of the peace process.

The illegal construction and expansion of settlements and the wall; home demolitions; excavations; the confiscation of Palestinian lands; the eviction of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem; the transfer of settlers; the imposition of arbitrary and racist restrictions on movement throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially within and around East Jerusalem; and the systematic destruction of the Palestinian economic infrastructure; among other illegal acts of incitement, provocation and aggression perpetrated by extremist settlers against the Palestinian population and their holy sites, must end immediately, as called for in many resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the construction of the wall, issued in 2004.

Cuba reiterates its call for an end to the prolonged and illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, the immediate, unconditional and complete lifting of the cruel and illegal blockade against the Gaza Strip, and the opening of the border crossings and checkpoints so as to allow unimpeded access of humanitarian aid and essential goods and supplies, and the transit of persons from and to the Gaza Strip.

The international community cannot remain impassive in the face of these abuses and violations against the Palestinian people. The Security Council must adopt, without further delay, practical measures to ensure that Israel ends its aggression against the Palestinian people, and that it is held accountable for the crimes of aggression, collective punishments, arbitrary detentions, mass incarcerations and genocide committed against the Palestinian people. The historical debt to the Palestinian people is huge and must be paid.

We reiterate the need to redouble efforts to resolve the difficult situation of the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with the norms and principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

On this significant date, Cuba reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and its determination to continue supporting them in their legitimate struggle for justice, dignity and peace and in defence of their inalienable right to self-determination and sovereignty in an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

(Signed) Bruno **Rodríguez Parrilla**