



Speech for United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the

Palestinian People - Canberra, 1 December 2016

- Good evening distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen
- It's my pleasure to be with you tonight to celebrate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
- I would like to thank the United Nations information Centre and the Council of Arab Ambassadors for their vital roles in making the event this evening possible
- So, what does standing in *Solidarity* with the Palestinian people actually mean?
- For me, solidarity is an attitude of resistance
- Solidarity is about people uniting around a shared interest, identity, goal, or feeling
- It can be shown through the simplest of gestures, such as wearing a Palestinian Keffiyeh
- By standing in solidarity with a group of people, we are necessarily standing against something, demonstrating resistance against a system of oppression, challenging this system with the hope of ultimately changing it to create a more just reality
- The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is about standing with Palestinians, asserting their inalienable right to self-determination, and resisting the oppressive occupation that is preventing Palestinians from exercising this right
- The official date of 29 November was chosen for its observation as on that day in 1947, The UN General Assembly adopted resolution 181, or the Partition Resolution, which provided for the establishment of two-states on the land of historic Palestine—a Jewish State and a Palestinian State
- Only one such state with real sovereignty and self-determination, Israel, has so far come into being

- The International Day of Solidarity is an opportunity for the international community to stress this point, asserting the need for a just two-state solution and the realisation of the inalienable Palestinian right to self-determination
- This is not to discount the great achievements that have been made by Palestinians since the UN Partition Resolution, progressing from dispossession to steadfastness and resistance through state-building; from being wiped off the map to becoming a widely-recognised international actor
- These achievements have been made in the face of great adversity, as I'm sure many of you are acutely aware
- We have had to overcome huge obstacles to peace—the illegal Israeli settlement project has continued unabated; occurring alongside the demolition of Palestinian homes, physical and verbal abuse, the detention of Palestinian children, and the confiscation of Palestinian land, water, and other vital resources
- These human rights violations form part of a wider project of forcing Palestinians further out of their homeland in a process that can only be described as ethnic cleansing, in blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, international humanitarian law and international human rights law
- UN General Assembly resolutions asserting the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to Palestine and strongly condemning the Israeli settlement project are consistently adopted each year by a vast majority of member states
- With the support of the international community, the Palestinian people have been able to overcome the fragmented existence that the occupation has created for them by uniting around their shared identity
- This was visibly demonstrated during the First Intifada, where Palestinians joined hands in solidarity, resisting the oppression of the occupation
- This collective movement has since transformed into an approach of steadfastness and non-violent resistance, working alongside the political strategies of state-building and internationalization to create a brighter future for Palestinians
- This has seen the development of transparent, accountable institutions that provide quality services to the Palestinian people through the implementation of effective public works programs

- Also, Palestine has asserted itself as a legitimate international actor—being recognised as a state by the United Nations and over 138 countries, and signing the ICC’s Rome Statute, among countless other achievements
- Such achievements have likewise been reflected in the developing relationship between Palestine and Australia
- Australian aid to Palestine has reached \$42.8 million annually, primarily supporting agricultural development, education, state-building, and health services
- On the political level, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop visited Palestine in September this year and conducted fruitful discussions with both the Palestinian leadership and the Minister for Economy, where it was agreed that trade relations and economic cooperation should be increased between Palestine and Australia
- Also, the official positions on Palestine of the Australian political parties has developed significantly in recent years
- The Australian public are likewise increasingly supportive of the Palestinian cause, with 64% of Australians condemning the building of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land
- These positive trends reflect the amazing support shown by Australians, and the international community more broadly, standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people
- We must continue to stand together, further uniting and organising ourselves as a community to present a powerful, unified voice in resisting oppression and asserting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people
- Thank you everyone, and I hope that you enjoy this wonderful evening

