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***Report of the Secretary General on
Palestine and Arab Occupied Territories***

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Palestine

The Question of Palestine has witnessed prominent events and developments of far-reaching effects since the convention of the thirty-ninth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Djibouti on 15-17 November 2012 because of the continued Israeli occupation and its ongoing violations of the rights of the Palestinian People, including:

1. Israel, the occupying Power, escalated its aggressive measures unprecedentedly against the Palestinian People in the city of Al-Quds Ash-Sharif. The Israeli occupation intensified its policies that come in line with an extremist religious attempt to control the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and establish the Jewish presence therein. This took various forms, including but not limited to, intensification of excavations and tunnels underneath Al-Aqsa Mosque, closure of its gates and restriction of Muslims' access for prayer, increasing the frequency of break-ins of the Israeli police and extremist Jewish groups into its yards to perform Talmudic rites, opening a number of synagogues nearby, and continuing the execution that endanger its foundation.
2. The police of the Israeli occupation and the extremist Jewish settlers attacked the Christian clergymen and prevented them from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during Easter Saturday celebrations at Al-Quds in a flagrant violation of the international norms, laws, and covenants.
3. Israel, the occupying Power, continued its *fait accompli* policy on the ground to change the demographic fabric of Al-Quds Ash-Sharif, obliterate its identity, and isolate it from its Palestinian milieu through expansion of settlements and the racial segregation wall. Since Palestine was accorded the non-Member observer State status at the United Nations on 29 November 2012, Israel built more than 11500 new settlement units. This was accompanied with intensified aggressions by the extremist settlers on the Palestinian People and its sanctities and properties.
4. Israel, the occupying Power, intensified its aggressive measures of revoking the residency rights of the Palestinians in Al-Quds along with confiscation of their lands and properties, demolition of their houses, and imposing excessive fines on them in addition to restricting their house constructions. Israel also isolates Al-Quds from its Palestinian milieu by military checkpoints and racial segregation wall.

5. Israel, the occupying Power, continued imposing restrictions to impede the development process in the Palestinian territory. It repeatedly refused to transfer tax revenues to the general budget of the State of Palestine. It has been imposing an unjust blockade on the Gaza Strip, disconnecting the various parts of the Palestinian territories, isolating Palestinian cities and towns from one another, and restricting the freedom of movement as a result of the Israeli military checkpoints. This has increased the existing financial deficit of the public budget of the State of Palestine, exacerbated the current financial challenges, and undermined its capacity to meet the needs of the Palestinian People.

Occupied Syrian Golan

Israel continued its occupation of the Syrian Golan and consolidated its settlement activities there. Israel, the occupation Power, refused the implementation of the international resolutions calling for ending the occupation and increased its practices that infringe upon the rights of the Syrian Arab citizens at the occupied Syrian Golan in the form of confiscation of the remaining agricultural lands, expansion of settlements and increasing the number of settlers therein, along with suppression of freedoms, seizure of water resources, contamination of environment, and destruction and theft of Golan cultural monuments.

Lebanese Occupied Territories

Israel has been occupying the Lebanese territories, including Shebaa Farms, the Kfar Shuba Hills and the northern part of the village of Ghajar, violating the sovereignty of the Lebanese territory and airspace and stealing its water resources. Israel still refuses to disclose the maps of the landmines it implanted in the Lebanese territories that were under occupation though these landmines seriously endanger the lives of the Lebanese citizens and prevent them from having normal daily lives.

Because of these serious events abovementioned, the entire region has been enshrouded in an intensified state of instability and tension. Against the backdrop of this thorny issue, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has attempted to perform its role in defending the just Palestinian Cause. The following part of the report provides a succinct description of the efforts exerted by the OIC General Secretariat on the Palestinian Cause and the Middle East Conflict.

1. The developments in Palestine have been the top priority of the OIC political action that included reviewing these developments at all meetings and contacts I have had with the leaders and senior officials at the international level, including US Secretary of State, John Kerry. In this

regard, I held many meetings with international officials to discuss the developments in the Middle East, including the Israeli violations, especially in the city of Al-Quds Ash-Sharif, in addition to the stalemate in the Middle East Peace Process because of the Israeli policies.

2. My political efforts centered upon the OIC principled stands that call for regaining the Palestinian national rights, complete Israeli withdrawal from all the territories it occupied in 1967, establishment of the independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and return of the Palestinian refugees as enshrined in the International Law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. In this regard, I urged many countries to recognize the independent Palestinian State within the borders of June 1967.
3. The OIC has exerted unremitting efforts with a number of countries to ensure their support to the right of Palestine in expanding the international recognition at all levels, including support of the bid for recognition of the State of Palestine at the UN General Assembly. The efforts of the OIC and its Member States commendably resulted in granting Palestine the non-Member observer State Status at the United Nations on 29/11/2012.
4. I sent letters to the foreign ministers of the Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Albania, and Republic of Togo regarding their abstention during the voting for the request of the State of Palestine to have the non-Member observer State Status at the United Nations. In addition, a memorandum was sent to all Member States on the importance of supporting the State of Palestine at the United Nations.
5. The Assistant Secretary General for Palestinian Affairs participated at the Regional Conference organized by the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on 27-28 February 2013 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy.
6. The Assistant Secretary General for Palestinian Affairs participated at the Regional Conference organized by the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People under the title: "African Solidarity with the Palestinian people for the Achievement of its Inalienable Rights, including the Sovereignty and Independence of the State of Palestine" on 29-30 April 2013 at the UN headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
7. H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti to the United Nations delivered a number of political statements in the name of the Islamic Group in New York before the periodic sessions of the UN Security Council to discuss the situation in the Middle East and the political developments related to the Question of Palestine.
8. The OIC representative and permanent ambassador at New York participated at the international conference on solidarity with the Palestinian

People and the meeting of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held in Caracas, Venezuela on 19 April 2013. The parties that signed Caracas Declaration reiterated their absolute support to the Palestinian People in its struggle to obtain its legitimate rights. They also decided to ask the UN General Assembly to proclaim 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and to launch a global campaign to bring an end to the Israeli occupation, realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive negotiated peace.

9. A delegation of the Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs and Assistant Secretary General for Palestinian Affairs participated at the 38th Annual Meeting of the IDB Group in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 21 May 2013.
10. I received a letter from H.E. the Indonesian Foreign Minister that included a proposal on offering financial assistance to the State of Palestine through setting up an Islamic financial safety net. Accordingly, this item was incorporated in the agenda of the Islamic Summit in Cairo in February 2013.
11. A delegation chaired by the Assistant Secretary General for Palestinian Affairs participated at the International Conference for Solidarity with the Palestinian and Arab Prisoners at Israeli Prisons held in Baghdad, Iraq, on 11-12 December 2012.
12. On the sidelines of my visit to Vienna, I held a meeting for the ambassadors of the OIC Member States in Austria on 29/11/2012 to coordinate a concerted stand on the Palestinian request to be granted the non-Member observer State status at the United Nations. The meeting asserted the consensus of the OIC Member States to support the Palestinian demand.
13. I issued a number of statements to express the OIC stand that condemns the Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly as regards the continuation and escalation of the Israeli settlement activities and attacks on Islamic and Christian sanctities and highlighting the issue of Palestinian prisoners at Israeli detention centers.
14. The OIC General Secretariat organized a photo gallery in Jeddah on the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque to culturally highlight its prominent holy sites, assert the religious identity and historical and cultural values of Al-Quds and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and revive its image in the minds and hearts of our Ummah.
15. I made a phone call with the UN Secretary General after the arrest of Shaikh Muhammad Hussain, the Mufti of Al-Quds and Palestine. I briefed him on the repeated Israeli violations in Al-Quds Ash-Sharif. I demanded the United Nations to place pressure on Israel and obligate it to respect the

International Law, conventions, and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

16. The OIC General Secretariat participated at a number of regional and international conferences and activities in advocacy of the legitimate Palestinian rights organized by the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the League of Arab States.
17. H.E. Ambassador Samir Bakr, the Assistant Secretary General for Palestinian Affairs, received at the OIC General Secretariat on 27/5/2013, a delegation from the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. Both sides held bilateral talks on the situation and developments in Palestine and Al-Quds Ash-Sharif. The visiting delegation also met with representatives of the various departments at the OIC General Secretariat.
18. In implementation of the provisions of the relevant resolutions of the Islamic Summit and CFM, the group of the OIC Member States' ambassadors at the UNESCO continued its efforts to convey the OIC stand and its profound concern towards the ongoing Israeli violations of the rights of the Palestinian People.
19. The OIC General Secretariat provided a financial contribution of US\$ 50,000 for the organization and sponsorship of the International Islamic Conference of Bait Al-Maqdis held in Ramallah on 5-6 June 2013 under the title of "Islamic and Christian Endowments in the City of Al-Quds under the Israeli Occupation". The conference was attended by Arab, Islamic, and international delegations and aimed to mobilize the public opinion to defend the city of Al-Quds Ash-Sharif and face the Israeli Judaization policy.
20. The Donor Conference to Finance the Strategic Plan for the Development of the City of Al-Quds Ash-Sharif was generously hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan and held in Baku on 11 June 2013 in implementation of the resolution adopted by the 12th Session of the Islamic Summit held in Cairo, Egypt, in February 2013. Some OIC Member States provided undertakings to contribute to the financing of the projects contained in the said plan towards the support of the legitimate Palestinian rights in Al-Quds Ash-Sharif, protect its heritage and sanctities, defend its Arab and Islamic identity, consolidate the resistance and resilience of its people, alleviate their suffering, and enable them to face the Israeli Judaization policy that targets the sacred city.
21. A conference to establish a financial safety net to support the State of Palestine was generously hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan and held in Baku on 11 June 2013 in implementation of the resolution adopted by the 12th Session of the Islamic Summit held in Cairo, Egypt, in February 2013. The objective was to consolidate financial and economic support provided

to the State of Palestine and to enable it meet its obligations towards the Palestinian People and continue the establishment of its institutions.

22. With a view to strengthening the capabilities of the Al Quds and Al Aqsa Funds and allowing them to finance social, economic and all other programmes to boost the resistance of the Palestinian people, the 39th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers held in Djibouti in November 2012, based on the proposal of the People's democratic Republic of Algeria, adopted resolution no. 6/39 on Financial Support Mechanisms for the Palestinian People. The resolution called on OIC member states that are yet to join the funds to do so and contribute, in accordance with their means, to this solidarity action with the Palestinian people. The General Secretariat and the Islamic Development Bank were mandated to implement the resolution. The 12th Islamic Summit held in Cairo in February 2013 also urged member states that are yet to join the funds to do so and contribute to them. In order to implement the above-mentioned resolution and mobilize support to realize its objectives, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria sent communication to his counterparts in the member states urging them to contribute to them.
23. His Majesty Muhammad VI, the King of Morocco and Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, sent letters to the five permanent countries at the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General, President of the European Union, and the Pope in which he expressed his deep concern over the latest developments in Al-Quds at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. He also addressed the UNESCO Director General to urge her to find the best method for the implementation of the UNESCO resolutions on the protection of the international human and cultural heritage of Al-Quds Ash-Sharif and protection of the educational, population, and cultural situation therein.
24. The political developments of the Palestinian Question require further efforts by the OIC. The Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the attempts to Judaize Al-Quds and the Israeli unjust blockade on the Gaza Strip remain among the major challenges we intend to face. I shall spare no effort to help the vital sectors at Al-Quds Ash-Sharif. At the same time, I shall exert all efforts possible to support the Palestinian quest to expand the scope of international support and recognition of the State of Palestine.
25. The Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan remains one of the important issues I discuss with world leaders. In this regard, I always assert that the permanent and comprehensive resolution of the Middle East Conflict shall not materialize unless Israel completely withdraws from all the territories

it occupies since 1967, including the Syrian occupied Golan, and implements the UN relevant resolutions.

26. The Israeli occupation of the Lebanese territories is still another major issue I review at my meetings with world leaders. I reiterate the OIC stand calling for the complete withdrawal of Israel from all the Lebanese territories and stoppage of its attacks and violations of the Lebanese territories and airspace.