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Culture of peace

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

**Letter dated 25 November 2024 from the Permanent Representative
of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the
Security Council**

I have the honour to refer to matters concerning the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations. The Group held an extraordinary ministerial meeting on 25 November 2024 for the purpose of addressing the latest developments in the Middle East and the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and most particularly in the Gaza Strip, as well as against the people of Lebanon and the wider region.

In this regard, I am pleased to transmit herewith the political declaration adopted at that time (see annex).

I respectfully request you to circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 14, 34 and 35, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samuel **Moncada**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 25 November 2024 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Political declaration adopted during the extraordinary ministerial meeting on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East

1. We, representatives of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Nicaragua, the State of Palestine, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe, members of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, met virtually, at the ministerial level, and as part of respective national and international activities to commemorate the "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People", to undertake an assessment of the latest developments in the Middle East and the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and most particularly in the Gaza Strip, as well as against the people of Lebanon and the wider region, and consider ways and means to effectively advance the just cause of Palestine at this critical time.
2. We recall the political declarations previously adopted by the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the positions contained in the various joint statements and communiqués issued, particularly over the past year, in connection with the situation in the Middle East and the Question of Palestine.
3. We take note with utmost concern of the briefing received from H.E. Dr. Varsen Aghabekian, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, which depicted the severity of the dire situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and reiterate our condolences to the families and loved ones of all innocent civilians who have lost their lives and who have been wounded since the beginning of the most recent and regrettable spiral of violence, death and destruction, which began over thirteen (13) months ago and that has, thus far, claimed the lives of over 44,000 Palestinians, particularly women and children, with thousands more civilians missing under the rubble of destroyed homes or in mass graves, while deliberately causing starvation and famine, spread of diseases, forced displacement and mass detention and imprisonment, alongside the vast destruction of homes, communities, schools, hospitals, United Nations facilities and other vital civilian infrastructure, constituting an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe that is unsustainable and unconscionable, and that continues to shock the conscience of all decent people.
4. We express our admiration for the resilience and dignity of the Palestinian people, which has heroically endured the deprivation of their rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination, for more than seven decades, and with an implacable intensity over the past thirteen (13) months: from apartheid and occupation policies to illegal settlements; from sieges and blockades to home demolitions; from colonialism and collective punishment to other cruel, inhuman or degrading practices; from military brutality to war crimes, and now the horrific genocide we are all witnessing in the Gaza Strip. The entire international community has now been witnessing for far too long this ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people. Enough is enough and, thus, we echo the recent remarks by the Secretary-General of the United Nations: "it is time to silence the guns; time to stop

the suffering; time for peace, international law and justice". It is time to end this illegal colonial occupation and historic injustice. It is time to end the decades of displacement, dispossession and persecution of the Palestinian people.

5. We, in line with our principled and historic positions, therefore, renew our firm commitment to the just cause of Palestine, as well as our unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people in their ongoing struggle to achieve their inalienable rights, freedom and justice. We further reaffirm our full and continued support to all efforts aimed at ending the grave injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people since the 1948 Nakba. We also remain committed to strengthening our efforts, including active engagement in international initiatives, aimed at ending the illegal Israeli occupation and at achieving the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem / Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital; the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom; and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Question of Palestine in all its aspects, including for the plight of the Palestine refugees and the realization of their right to return, in accordance with international law, the relevant UN resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations, and on the basis of the two-State solution, enabling the realization of the independence of a sovereign and viable Palestinian State, on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

6. We emphasize the urgent need of redoubling international efforts to effectively and immediately advance a much-needed process of accountability for all war crimes committed by Israel, the Occupying Power, against the peoples of Palestine, Lebanon and other nationalities, in which all relevant mechanisms of international justice are expected to play a responsible role, in order to put an end to the prevailing cycle of impunity, which has only emboldened Israel, the Occupying Power, to perpetuate over time its criminal policies and practices against the people of the region, most gravely against the Palestinian people for over 76 years since the onset of the *Nakba*. We welcome, in this regard, the decision of some Member States of our Group of Friends to take part in the legal process at the ICJ, under the "*South Africa v. Israel*" case.

7. We, in the context of ongoing proceedings at relevant international courts, note recent developments and make vows for these to serve as a deterrent and to provide for an end to perceptions that, in the past, may have led Israel, the Occupying Power, to erroneously think that it is above the law; a situation that, ultimately and most regrettably, has only emboldened it to continue with its crimes and aggressions against the Palestinian people, particularly as witnessed now in the horrific situation in the Gaza Strip, as well as against other peoples across the region.

8. We welcome the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ of 19 July 2024, which determined, *inter alia*, i) that Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is unlawful and must be brought to an end as rapidly as possible; ii) that Israel is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and iii) that the Occupying Power's policies and practices are designed to create irreversible effects on the ground and maintain Israeli presence in and control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory indefinitely. We recall, in this context, General Assembly resolution [ES-10/24](#) of 18 September 2024, which, *inter alia*, demands that Israel ends its illegal occupation no later than 12 months from the adoption of that resolution, aimed at bringing an end to this illegal situation and assisting the Palestinian people to finally realize their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and to the independence of their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

9. We urge the Security Council of the United Nations to shoulder its responsibilities, including on the basis of the relevant provisions of Chapter VII of

the Charter of the United Nations, and to ensure that its resolutions on the Question of Palestine are both fully respected and implemented. We stress that time has come for the UN Security Council not only to adopt a resolution demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire, respected by all parties, that would allow for unimpeded humanitarian access, consistently, safely and to scale, but also for that body, as well as for all responsible members of the international community, to take urgent measures, within the powers conferred upon it by the UN Charter, aimed at ceasing the provision or transfer of arms, munitions and related equipment to Israel, the Occupying Power, in all cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they may be used in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for further prolonging this illegal occupation and further expanding Israel's aggressions across the region, mindful of the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution [ES-10/24](#), adopted by the General Assembly on 18 September 2024. We commend the efforts of members of our Group of Friends in responsibly exercising their duties as members of the Security Council of the United Nations and both submitting and supporting proposals aimed at advancing the just cause of Palestine within that body.

10. We condemn the obstruction of the UN Security Council's action by the government of the United States of America, which amounts to further complicity with Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by repeatedly obstructing that body from fulfilling its responsibilities, severely undermining peace, security and stability in the Middle East. We further condemn, in this context, the most recent decision by the U.S. government, on 20 November 2024, to vote against a draft resolution submitted by the elected members of the UN Security Council and supported by all other members of that body, which, among others, and most importantly, sought to demand an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire respected by all parties to the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip. We urge the U.S. government to put an end to its indifference to and complicity in the suffering of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip and to yield to the overwhelming majority of the world, which insists on the rule of law at the international level and the respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and stands in solidarity and support for the just plight of the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights.

11. We further reaffirm our support for the long-overdue admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member State of the United Nations and to enable it to take its rightful place among the community of nations and welcome, in this regard, General Assembly resolution [ES-10/23](#), adopted by an overwhelming majority on 10 May 2024, as a significant step in that direction. We demand that, on the basis of the provisions of that General Assembly resolution, the Security Council of the United Nations revisits this pending issue as soon as possible, in order to correct once and for all this historic injustice with the State of Palestine and favorably reconsider its request for membership in the United Nations.

12. We reiterate our serious concern at the continued attempts of Israel, the Occupying Power, to ignite and explode the Middle East region, as demonstrated, among others, by its repeated gross violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, coupled with its deliberate escalation of violence and continued provocations and violations against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, stability and security of countries in the region. We call on those who may have any influence to demand Israel, the Occupying Power, to exert restraint and desist from its plans to extend the conflict to Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, mindful of its potential devastating consequences for the wellbeing of entire peoples and the peace, stability and security of the Middle East region as a whole.

13. We recall the duty of States to strictly observe, implement and enforce, including during times of armed conflict, all the applicable principles and rules of international law governing diplomatic and consular relations, particularly those relating to inviolability of diplomatic missions and agents, deriving from relevant applicable legal instruments and UN General Assembly resolutions. We reiterate, in this context, our categorical condemnation at the Israeli aggression against the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the attacks perpetrated over the past months against its diplomatic premises and representatives in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Lebanese Republic, while emphasizing that such acts, which constitute clear violations, among others, of the sovereignty of Host Countries, can never be justified.

14. We reiterate that establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East requires Israel's withdrawal from *all* Occupied Arab Territories, including the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, and implementing relevant United Nations resolutions, most notably Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and 497 (1981), which reaffirmed that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, and that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan is null, void and has no international legal effect.

15. We condemn the ongoing brutal Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the repeated Israeli attacks against the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, as they constitute a clear aggression against the territories of sovereign States and a flagrant violation of the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We stress, in this context, the need to hold Israel, the Occupying Power, accountable and to ensure the cessation of these acts of aggression and illegal activities.

16. We express our serious concern at the recent Israeli legislative measures on the termination of any sort of cooperation with UNRWA, which breaches, among others, Israel's obligations as an Occupying Power under international humanitarian law and its obligations under the UN Charter and the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, as well as countless General Assembly resolutions. We condemn this malign act and underscore that this ban is detrimental to international humanitarian law obligations concerning the provision of humanitarian aid in occupied territories and may constitute a war crime, including due to the use of starvation as a weapon of war. In this context, we reject any attempt by the Occupying Power aimed at preventing UNRWA from implementing its mandate and effectively continuing its essential work on the ground, and we condemn Israel's attacks on UNRWA personnel and premises, including the killing 246 UNRWA staff members and causing destruction to its facilities, including hundreds of schools, which had to be turned into refugee camps. We recognize UNRWA's decades-long contribution to the wellbeing, human development and protection of the Palestine refugees and the safeguarding of their rights and dignity, while pledging our full support at this dire time, in order to ensure that it can continue providing its vital services to all those in desperate need, in accordance with its mandate, until a just solution is realized for the Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

17. We condemn the continuous attacks and threats by Israel and its representatives against the United Nations and its Secretary-General, including the decision to declare the latter *persona non grata*. We further condemn the Israeli ban on the work of United Nations established mechanisms, which has prevented, among others, Commissions of Inquire, Special Rapporteurs and members of the Office of the High Commissioner from entering the territory of the State of Palestine.

18. We strongly condemn the deliberate targeting and attacks against the United Nations' Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) by Israel, which constitute direct

violations of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, including international humanitarian law. We demand that those responsible be held accountable and that the safety and security of UNIFIL's personnel and premises be guaranteed at all times, without qualification. We express our full support to UNIFIL, while underscoring its vital role in supporting regional stability.

19. We express our determination not to allow the ongoing situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and most particularly in the Gaza Strip, as well as in Lebanon, to become normalized; not to allow the violence unleashed by Israel, the Occupying Power, to become normalized. We cannot lose our capacity for astonishment, much less stop demanding that the competent bodies of the multilateral system, particularly the Security Council of the United Nations, fulfill their mandates and put aside their political calculations and alliances, for it has been this paralysis, among others, that has emboldened Israel to continue with its policies of apartheid and extermination against the Palestinian people.

20. We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. António Guterres, aimed at achieving a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and restoring peace in the Middle East region as a whole, and urge him to provide regular reports to the UN Security Council on the profound, lasting and extensive humanitarian consequences of these Israeli military aggressions in the region, and to include the information on activities that may amount to violations of international law, including international humanitarian law.

21. We, in line with our principled positions in connection with the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures, reiterate our call for the complete, immediate and unconditional lifting of any unilateral or multilateral measure in place that may prevent or hamper the provision of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

22. We call on the responsible members of the international community to take urgent actions and adopt, in a decisive manner, all necessary measures aimed at preventing the systematic attempts aimed at undermining, including by force and through the resort to illegal colonial settlers, the viability of the State of Palestine, particularly in light of increasing threats by Israel to annex the occupied West Bank. We recall, in this context, the conclusion of the ICJ in its Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 that “the sustained abuse by Israel of its position as an Occupying Power, through annexation and assertion of permanent control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory and continued frustration of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, violates fundamental principles of international law and render’s Israel presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory unlawful”.

23. We call on the international community to take effective action to compel Israel, the Occupying Power, to adhere to international law, including through the continued denunciation of the prevailing double standards and selectivity in the application of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law, and through warning that these double standards seriously undermine the credibility of States that insist on protecting the illegal and criminal actions of Israel and the legitimacy of multilateral institutions.

24. We stress our determination to remain seized of the Question of Palestine and actively mobilized and to maintain close coordination in our efforts, until justice to the Palestinian people and their just cause, which is central to our common endeavors, is achieved once and for all.

25. We, on a separate note, seize this opportunity to welcome the decision of the Republic of Uganda to join us and become a full Member State of our grouping, while looking forward to working closely together in pursuing the aims of our Group of Friends and effectively advancing in the defense of the Charter of the United Nations

and renewing our readiness to be joined in this important by those members of the international community that are committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in that timeless treaty, as well as with the values of dialogue, tolerance and solidarity.

26. We entrust the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to bring this Political Declaration to the attention of the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council, the President of the General Assembly and the wider membership of both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

25 November 2024
