

Palestinian National Council Declaration of Independence (November 14, 1988)

Meeting in Algiers, the PNC accepted the new policy of Arafat and called for the convening of an international peace conference for the Middle East, under the auspices of the Security Council and based on resolutions 242 and 338 and the assurance of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. They also renounced terrorism but accepted the right of people to fight against foreign occupation. It also called for the continuation of the intifada. The document proclaimed the independence of Palestine without defining its borders with Jerusalem as its capital. Texts of the declaration of independence and the PNC political resolution follow:

In the valiant land of Algeria, hosted by its people and its president, Chedli Benjedid, the Palestine National Council held its 19th extraordinary session - the session of the intifada and independence, the session of the martyred hero Abu Jihad - in the period between the 12th and 15th of November, 1988.

The session culminated in the announcement of the rise of the Palestinian state in our Palestinian land, the natural climax of a daring and tenacious popular struggle than started more than 70 years ago and was baptized in the immense sacrifices offered by our people in our homeland, along its borders, and in the camps and other sites of our diaspora.

The session was also distinguished by its focus on the great national Palestinian intifada as one of the major milestones in the contemporary history of the Palestinian people's revolution, on a par with the legendary steadfastness of our people in their camps in our occupied land and outside it.

The primary features of our great people's intifada were obvious from its inception and have become clearer in the 12 months since then during which it has continued unabated. It is a total popular revolution that embodies the consensus of an entire nation - women and men, old and young, in the camps, the villages and the cities - on the rejection of the occupation and on the determination to struggle until the occupation is defeated and terminated.

The glorious intifada has demonstrated our people's deeply rooted national unity and their full adherence to the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of our people, all our people, wherever they congregate - in our homeland or outside it. This was manifested by the participation of the Palestinian masses - their unions, their vocational organizations, their students, their workers, their farmers, their women, their merchants, their landlords, their artisans, their academics - in the intifada through its Unified National Command, the Popular Committees that were formed in the urban neighborhoods, the villages and the camps.

This, our people's revolutionary furnace and their blessed intifada, along with the cumulative impact of our innovative and continuous revolution inside and outside our homeland, have destroyed the illusion our people's enemies have harbored that they can turn the occupation of the Palestinian land into a permanent fait accompli and consign the Palestinian issue to oblivion. For our generations have been weaned on

the goals and principles of the Palestinian revolution and have lived all its battles since its birth in 1965 - including its heroic resistance to the Zionist invasion of 1982 and the steadfastness of the revolution's camps as they endured the siege of death and starvation in Lebanon. Those generations - the children of the revolution and of the Palestine Liberation Organization - rose to demonstrate the dynamism and continuity of the revolution, detonating the land under the feet of its occupiers and proving that our people's reserves of resistance are inexhaustible and their faith is too deep to uproot.

Thus did the struggle of the children of the RPG outside our homeland and the struggle of the children of the sacred stones inside it blend into a single revolutionary melody.

Our people have stood fast against all the attempts of our enemy's authorities to end our revolution, and those authorities have tried everything at their disposal: They have used terrorism, they have imprisoned us, they have sent us into exile, they have desecrated our holy places and restricted our religious freedoms, they have demolished our homes, they have killed us indiscriminately and premeditatedly, they have sent bands of armed settlers into our villages and camps, they have burned our crops, they have cut off our water and power supplies, they have beaten our women and children, they have used toxic gases that have caused many deaths and abortions, and they have waged an ignorance war against us by closing our schools and universities.

Our people's heroic steadfastness has cost them hundreds of martyrs and tens of thousands of casualties, prisoners and exiles. But our people's genius was always at hand, ready in their darkest hours to innovate the means and formulas to struggle that stiffened their resistance, bolstered their steadfastness and enabled them to confront the crimes and measures of the enemy and carry on with their heroic, tenacious struggle.

By standing firm, continuing their revolution and escalating their intifada, our people have proved their determination to press ahead regardless of the sacrifices, armed with a great heritage of struggle, an indomitable revolutionary will, a deeply entrenched national unity that has been rendered even stronger by the intifada and its attendant struggles inside and outside our homeland, and total adherence to the nationalist principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its goals of ending the Israeli occupation and achieving the Palestinian people's inalienable right to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of the independent Palestinian state.

In all this, our people relied on the sustenance of the masses and forces of our Arab nation, which have stood by us and backed us, as demonstrated by the wide popular Arab support for the intifada and by the consensus and resolutions that emerged at the Arab summit in Algiers - all of which goes to confirm that our people do not stand alone as they face the fascist, racist assault, and this precludes any possibility of the Israeli aggressors isolating our people and cutting them off from the support of their Arab nation. In addition to this Arab solidarity, our people's revolution and their blessed intifada have attracted widespread worldwide solidarity, as seen in the increased understanding of the Palestinian people's issue, the growing support of our just struggle by the peoples and states of the world, and the corresponding

condemnation of Israeli occupation and the crimes it is committing, which has helped to expose Israel and increase its isolation and the isolation of its supporters.

Security Council Resolutions 605, 607 and 608 and the resolutions of the General Assembly against the deportation of the Palestinians from their land and against the repression and terrorism with which Israel is lashing the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories - these are strong manifestations of the growing support of international opinion, public and official, for our people and their representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and of mounting international rejection of Israeli occupation with all the fascist, racist practices it entails.

The UN General Assembly's resolution of 3.11.1988, which was adopted in the session dedicated to the intifada, is another sign of the stand the peoples and states of the world in their majority are taking against the occupation and with the just struggle of the Palestinian people and their firm right to liberation and independence. The crimes of the occupation and its savage, inhuman practices have exposed the Zionist lie about the democracy of the Zionist entity that has managed to deceive the world for 40 years, revealing Israel in its true light - a fascist, racist, colonialist state built on the usurpation of the Palestinian land and the annihilation of the Palestinian people, a state that threatens and undertakes attacks and expansion into the neighboring Arab lands.

It has thus been demonstrated that the occupation cannot continue to reap the fruits of its actions at the expense of the Palestinian people's rights without paying a price - either on the ground or in terms of international public opinion.

In addition to the rejection of the occupation and the condemnation of its repressive measures by the democratic and progressive Israeli forces, Jewish groups all over the world are no longer able to continue their defense of Israel or maintain their silence about its crimes against the Palestinian people. Many voices have risen among those groups to demand an end to these crimes and call for Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories in order to allow the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination. The fruits that our people's revolution and their blessed intifada have borne on the local, Arab and international levels have established the soundness and realism of the Palestine Liberation Organization's national program, a program aimed at the termination of the occupation and the achievement of our people's right to repatriation, self-determination and independent statehood. Those results have also confirmed that the struggle of our people is the decisive factor in the effort to snatch our national rights from the jaws of the occupation. It is the authority of our people, as represented in the Popular Committees, that controls the situation as we challenge the authority of the occupation's crumbling agencies.

The international community is now more prepared than ever before to strive for a political settlement of the Middle East crisis and its root cause, the Palestinian issue. The Israeli occupation authorities, and the American administration that stands behind them, cannot continue to ignore the international will, which is now unanimous on the necessity of holding an international peace conference on the Middle East and enabling the Palestinian people to gain their national rights, foremost among which is their right to self-determination and national independence on their own soil.

In the light of this, and toward the reinforcement of the steadfastness and blessed intifada of our people, and in accordance with the will of our masses in and outside our homeland, and in fidelity to those of our people who have been martyred, wounded or taken captive, the Palestinian National Council resolves:

First: On the escalation and continuity of the intifada

A. To provide all the means and capabilities needed to escalate our people's intifada in various ways and on various levels to guarantee its continuation and intensification.

B. To support the popular institutions and organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories.

C. To bolster and develop the Popular Committees and other specialized popular and trade union bodies, including the attack groups and the popular army, with a view to expanding their role and increasing their effectiveness.

D. To consolidate the national unity that emerged and developed during the intifada.

E. To intensify efforts on the international level for the release of the detainees, the repatriation of the deportees and the termination of the organized, official acts of repression and terrorism against our children, our women, our men, and our institutions.

F. To call on the United Nations to place the occupied Palestinian land under international supervision for the protection of our people and the termination of the Israeli occupation.

G. To call on the Palestinian people outside our homeland to intensify and increase their support, and to expand the family assistance program.

H. To call on the Arab nation, its people, forces, institutions and governments, to increase their political, material and informational support of the intifada.

I. To call on all free and honorable people worldwide to stand by our people, our revolution, our intifada against the Israeli occupation, the repression, and the organized, fascist official terrorism to which the occupation forces and the armed fanatic settlers are subjecting our people, our universities, our institutions, our national economy, and our Islamic and Christian holy places.

Second: In the political field

Proceeding from the above, the Palestine National Council, being responsible to the Palestinian people, their national rights and their desire for peace as expressed in the Declaration of Independence issued on November 15, 1988; and in response to the humanitarian quest for international entente, nuclear disarmament and the settlement of regional conflicts by peaceful means, affirms the determination of the Palestine Liberation Organization to arrive at a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the Palestinian issue, in the framework of the UN charter, the principles and rules of international legitimacy, the edicts of international law, the

resolutions of the United Nations, the latest of which are Security Council Resolutions 605, 607 and 608, and the resolutions of the Arab Summits, in a manner that ensures the Palestinian Arab people's right to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of their independent state on their national soil, and that institutes arrangements for the security and peace of all states in the region. Toward the achievement of this, the Palestine National Council affirms:

1. The necessity of convening an effective international conference on the issue of the Middle East and its core, the Palestinian issue, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict in the region, including, on an equal footing, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; on the understanding that the international conference will be held on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the safeguarding of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the right to self-determination, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the UN charter as they pertain to the right of people to self-determination and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of others' territory by force or military conquest, and in accordance with the UN resolutions relating to the Palestinian issue.

2. The withdrawal of Israel from all the Palestinian and Arab territories it occupied in 1967, including Arab Jerusalem.

3. The annulment of all expropriation and annexation measures and the removal of the settlements established by Israel in the Palestinian and Arab territories since 1967.

4. Endeavoring to place the occupied Palestinian territories, including Arab Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, to protect our people, to create an atmosphere conducive to the success of the proceedings of the international conference toward the attainment of a comprehensive political settlement and the achievement of peace and security for all on the basis of mutual consent, and to enable the Palestinian state to exercise its effective authority in these territories.

5. The settlement of the issue of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with the pertinent United Nations resolutions.

6. Guaranteeing the freedom of worship and the right to engage in religious rites for all faiths in the holy places in Palestine.

7. The Security Council shall draw up and guarantee arrangements for the security of all states concerned and for peace between them, including the Palestinian state.

The Palestine National Council confirms its past resolutions that the relationship between the fraternal Jordanian and Palestinian peoples is a privileged one and that the future relationship between the states of Jordan and Palestine will be built on confederated foundations, on the basis of the two fraternal peoples' free and voluntary choice, in consolidation of the historic ties that bind them and the vital interests they hold in common.

The National Council also renews its commitment to the United Nations resolutions that affirm the right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, imperialism and racial discrimination, and their right to fight for their independence; and it once more announces its rejection of terrorism in all its forms, including state terrorism, emphasizing its commitment to the resolutions it adopted in the past on this subject, and to the resolutions of the Arab Summit in Algiers in 1988, and to UN Resolutions 42/159 of 1967 and 61/40 of 1985, and to what was stated in this regard in the Cairo Declaration of 7.11.1985.

Third: In the Arab and international fields

The Palestine National Council emphasizes the importance of the unity of Lebanon in its territory, its people and its institutions, and stands firmly against the attempts to partition the land and disintegrate the fraternal people of Lebanon. It further emphasizes the importance of the joint Arab effort to participate in a settlement of the Lebanese crisis that helps crystallize and implement solutions that preserve Lebanese unity. The Council also stresses the importance of consecrating the right of the Palestinians in Lebanon to engage in political and informational activity and to enjoy security and protection; and of working against all the forms of conspiracy and aggression that target them and their right to work and live; and of the need to secure the conditions that assure them the ability to defend themselves and provide them with security and protection.

The Palestine National Council affirms its solidarity with the Lebanese nationalist Islamic forces in their struggle against the Israeli occupation and its agents in the Lebanese south; expresses its pride in the allied struggle of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples against the aggression and toward the termination of the Israeli occupation of parts of the south; and underscores the importance of bolstering this kinship between our people and the fraternal, combative people of Lebanon.

And on this occasion, the Council addresses a reverent salute to the long suffering people of our camps in Lebanon and its south, who are enduring the aggression, massacres, murder, starvation, destruction, air raids, bombardments and sieges perpetrated against the Palestinian camps and Lebanese villages by the Israeli army, air force and navy, aided and abetted by hireling forces in the region; and it rejects the resettlement conspiracy, for the Palestinians' homeland is Palestine.

The Council emphasizes the importance of the Iraq-Iran cease-fire resolution toward the establishment of a permanent peace between the two countries and in the Gulf region; and calls for an intensification of the efforts being exerted to ensure the success of the negotiations toward the establishment of peace on stable and firm foundations; affirming, on this occasion, the pride of the Palestinian Arab people and the Arab nation as a whole in the steadfastness and triumphs of fraternal Iraq as it defended the eastern gate of the Arab nation.

The National Council also expresses its deep pride in the stand taken by the peoples of the Arab nation in support of our Palestinian Arab people and of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of our people's intifada in the occupied homeland; and emphasizes the importance of fortifying the bonds of combat among the forces, parties and organizations of the Arab national liberation movement, in defense of the right of the Arab nation and its peoples to liberation, progress, democracy and unity.

The Council calls for the adoption of all measures needed to reinforce the unity of struggle among all members of the Arab national liberation movement.

The Palestine National Council, as it hails the Arab states and thanks them for their support of our people's struggle, calls on them to honor the commitments they approved at the summit conference in Algiers in support of the Palestinian people and their blessed intifada. The Council, in issuing this appeal, expresses its great confidence that the leaders of the Arab nation will remain, as we have known them, a bulwark of support for Palestine and its people.

The Palestine National Council reiterates the desire of the Palestine Liberation Organization for Arab solidarity as the framework within which the Arab nation and its states can organize themselves to confront Israel's aggression and American support of that aggression, and within which Arab prestige can be enhanced and the Arab role strengthened to the point of influencing international policies to the benefit of Arab rights and causes.

The Palestine National Council expresses its deep gratitude to all the states and international forces and organizations that support the national rights of the Palestinians; affirms its desire to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, the People's (Republic of) China, the other socialist countries, the non-aligned states, the Islamic states, the African states, the Latin American states and the other friendly states; and notes with satisfaction the signs of positive evolution in the positions of some West European states and Japan in the direction of support for the rights of the Palestinian people, applauds this development, and urges intensified efforts to increase it.

The National Council affirms the fraternal solidarity of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization with the struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America for their liberation and the reinforcement of their independence; and condemns all American attempts to threaten the independence of the states of Central America and interfere in their affairs.

The Palestine National Council expresses the support of the Palestine Liberation Organization for the national liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia - with a special salute to our brother combatant, Nelson Mandela - against the racist regime of Pretoria; demands that the peoples of the two countries be enabled to attain their liberty and independence; and also expresses its support for the African confrontation states and its condemnation of the racist South African regime's aggression against them.

The Council notes with considerable concern the growth of the Israeli forces of fascism and extremism and the escalation of their open calls for the implementation of the policy of annihilation and individual and collective expulsion of our people from their homeland, and calls for intensified efforts in all arenas to confront this fascist peril. The Council at the same time expresses its appreciation of the role and courage of the Israeli peace forces as they resist and expose the forces of fascism, racism and aggression, support our people's struggle and their valiant intifada, and back our people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state. The Council confirms its past resolutions regarding the reinforcement and development of relations with these democratic forces.

The Palestine National Council also addresses itself to the American people, calling on them all to strive to put an end to the American policy that denies the Palestinian people's national rights, including their sacred right to self-determination, and urging them to work toward the adoption of policies that conform to the Declaration of Human Rights and the international conventions and resolutions and serve the quest for peace in the Middle East and security for all its peoples, including the Palestinian people.

The Council charges the Executive Committee with the task of completing the formation of the Committee for the Perpetuation of the Memory of the Martyr Symbol Abu Jihad, which shall initiate its work immediately upon the adjournment of the Council.

The Council sends its greetings to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and to the fraternal and friendly international and non-governmental institutions and organizations, and to the journalists and media that have stood and still stand by our people's struggle and intifada.

The National Council expresses deep pain at the continued detention of hundreds of combatants from among our people in a number of Arab countries, strongly condemns their continued detention, and calls upon those countries to put an end to these abnormal conditions and release those fighters to play their role in the struggle.

In conclusion, the Palestine National Council affirms its complete confidence that the justice of the Palestinian cause and of the demands for which the Palestinian people are struggling will continue to draw increasing support from honorable and free people around the world; and also affirms its complete confidence in victory on the road to Jerusalem, the capital of our independent Palestinian state.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE PROCLAMATION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE.

The Palestine National Council decides in its extraordinary 19th session, the session of intifada:

- 1) The constitution, as soon as possible, of a provisional government for the State of Palestine in conformity with the circumstances and the course of events.
- 2) The Central Council and the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization are in charge of fixing the date for the constitution of the provisional government. The Executive Committee is in charge of this constitution, which will be submitted to the Central Council to be entrusted. The Central Council will adopt the provisional character of the government until the recovery by the Palestinian people of its full sovereignty on the Palestinian land.
- 3) The provisional government will be composed of the Palestinian leaders, personalities and competences within the occupied motherland and outside on the basis of political variety and in such way as to achieve national unity.

4) The provisional government will establish its program on the basis of the Independence document, the political program of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the decisions of the National Councils.

5) The Palestine National Council invests the Palestine Liberation Organization with the prerogatives and responsibilities of the provisional government until the constitution of the government.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful,

It was in Palestine, cradle of humanity's three monotheistic faiths, that the Palestinian Arab people was born, and it was there that it grew and developed, its unbroken, uninterrupted organic relationship with its land and its history molding its human and national being. With epic steadfastness, the Palestinian people forged their national identity, rising in their tenacious defense of it to miraculous heights. The magic of this ancient land and its location at the crossroads of powers and civilizations aroused ambitions and cravings, inviting invasions that led to the denial of political independence to its people. But the people's perpetual adherence to the land gave the land its identity and breathed the spirit of the homeland into the people.

Grafted with a succession of civilizations and cultures, inspired by their temporal and spiritual heritage, the Palestinian Arab people continued, across the ages, to develop their persona in a total union between Land and Man, and, walking in the footsteps that the prophets left on this blessed land, raised prayers of thanks to the Creator from every minaret and hymns of mercy and peace from every church and temple.

From generation to generation, the Palestinian Arab people never ceased their valiant defense of their homeland, embodying in their successive revolutions their will for national independence.

And when the contemporary world drafted its new order of values, the balance of local and international forces denied the Palestinian a share of the general weal, once more demonstrating that justice alone does turn the wheel of history. The painful inequity poured salt on the Palestinian wound. The people that had been denied independence and whose homeland had become the victim of a new breed of occupation became the target of attempts to propagate the lie that "Palestine is a land without a people". This historical fraud notwithstanding, the international community, in Article 22 of the covenant of the League of Nations of 1919, and in the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, had recognized that the Palestinian Arab people, like the other Arab peoples that had broken away from the Ottoman Empire, was a free and independent people.

Despite the historical injustice done to the Palestinian Arab people by their dispersion and deprivation of the right of self-determination after the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 of 1947, which partitioned Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish, that resolution still provides the legal basis for the right of the Palestinian Arab people to national sovereignty and independence. The occupation of the Palestinian land and of Arab territory by the Israeli forces, and

the uprooting and expulsion of the majority of the Palestinians from their homes by organized terrorism, and the subjection of the Palestinians who remained to occupation, persecution and the destruction of all semblances of national life, constitute a flagrant violation of all legal principles, and of the charter of the United Nations, and of those United Nations resolutions that recognize the national rights of the Palestinian people, including their rights to repatriation, self-determination, and independence and sovereignty on their national soil.

In the heart of our homeland, along its frontiers, and in their exiles near and far, the Palestinian Arab people never lost their deep faith in their right to return and their right to independence. The occupation, the massacres, the dispersion failed to loosen the Palestinian's grip on his national consciousness. He pressed his epic struggle and, through that struggle, continued to crystallize his national identity. And the national Palestinian will formed its own political framework: the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, recognized as such by the international community as represented by the United Nations and its institutions and by the other international and regional organizations. Armed with a belief in its people's inalienable rights, and with Arab national identity, and with international legitimacy, the Palestine Liberation Organization led the battles of its great people, a people fused into a solid national unity by the massacres and sieges to which it was subjected in its homeland and outside it. The epic of the Palestinian resistance entered the Arab and international records as one of the most distinguished national liberation movements of this era.

The titanic popular intifada waxing in the occupied land and the legendary steadfastness displayed in the camps of the homeland and the diaspora have raised human awareness of the Palestinian reality and the national rights of the Palestinians to the level of mature comprehension, bringing the curtain down on the phase of rampant deception and sedentary consciences, and besieging the official Israeli mentality that had grown addicted to reliance on myth and terrorism in its denial of the existence of the Palestinians. The rise of the intifada and the cumulative fruit of the revolution in all its aspects have brought the Palestinian saga to another historic juncture where the Palestinian Arab people must once more claim their rights and affirm their determination to exercise them on their Palestinian soil.

By virtue of the Palestinian Arab people's natural, historic and legal right to their homeland Palestine, and of the sacrifices of their successive generations in defense of the liberty and independence of their homeland;

Pursuant to the resolutions of the Arab Summit conferences;

By the authority of the international legitimacy, -as embodied in the resolutions of the United Nations since 1947; In implementation of the Palestinian Arab people's right to self-determination, political independence, and sovereignty on their soil; The National Council proclaims, in the name of God and the Palestinian Arab people, the establishment of the State of Palestine on our Palestinian land, with the Holy City of Jerusalem as its capital.

The State of Palestine is the state of Palestinians wherever they may be. In it they shall develop their national and cultural identity and enjoy full equality in rights.

Their religious and political beliefs and their human dignity shall be safeguarded under a democratic parliamentary system of government built on the freedom of opinion; and on the freedom to form parties; and on the protection of the rights of the minority by the majority and respect of the decisions of the majority by the minority; and on social justice and equal rights, free of ethnic, religious, racial or sexual discrimination; and on a constitution that guarantees the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary; and on the basis of total allegiance to the centuries-old spiritual and civilizational Palestinian heritage of religious tolerance and coexistence.

The State of Palestine is an Arab state, an integral part of the Arab nation and that nation's heritage, its civilization and its aspiration to attain its goals of liberation, development, democracy and unity. Affirming its commitment to the charter of the League of Arab States and its insistence on the reinforcement of joint Arab action, the State of Palestine calls on the people of its nation to assist in the completion of its birth by mobilizing their resources and augmenting their efforts to end the Israeli occupation.

The State of Palestine declares its commitment to the principles and objectives of the United Nations, and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to the principles and policy of non-alignment.

The State of Palestine, declaring itself a peace-loving state committed to the principles of peaceful coexistence, shall strive with all states and peoples to attain a permanent peace built on justice and respect of rights, in which humanity's constructive talents can prosper, and creative competition can flourish, and fear of tomorrow can be abolished, for tomorrow brings nothing but security for the just and those who regain their sense of justice.

As it struggles to establish peace in the land of love and peace, the State of Palestine exhorts the United Nations to take upon itself a special responsibility for the Palestinian Arab people and their homeland, and exhorts the peace-loving, freedom-cherishing peoples and states of the world to help it attain its objectives and put an end to the tragedy its people are suffering by providing them with security and endeavoring to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. The State of Palestine declares its belief in the settlement of international and regional disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the charter and resolutions of the United Nations; and its rejection of threats of force or violence or terrorism and the use of these against its territorial integrity and political independence or the territorial integrity of any other state, without prejudice to its natural right to defend its territory and independence.

On this glorious day, the 15th of November 1988, as we stand on the threshold of a new age, we bow in awe and reverence before the souls of our martyrs and the martyrs of the Arab nation, whose untainted blood fueled the flame of this dawn, who died so that their homeland can live. And we bask in the brilliant glow of the blessed intifada, and of the epic steadfastness of our people in their camps and their diaspora and their exiles, and of the standard-bearers of our freedoms; our children, our youth and our aged; those of our people who, wounded or taken captive, continue to man their posts on the holy soil of every village and city; and the brave Palestinian women, guardian of our life and posterity, keeper of our eternal flame.

To the innocent souls of our martyrs, to the masses of our Palestinian Arab people and our Arab nation, and to all the world's free and honorable people we make this

pledge: that we shall continue our struggle to roll back the occupation and entrench our sovereignty and independence.

We call upon our great people to rally around their Palestinian flag, to take pride in it and defend it, so that it will remain forever the symbol of our liberty and dignity in a homeland that will forever remain the free homeland of a free people.