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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT PRESS ENCOUNTER WITH H.E. MR. REUVEN RIVLIN**
**PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**
**Jerusalem, 27 June 2016**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

Shalom and thank you, Mr. President, for your warm welcome to Israel.

As you know, I am in my tenth and final year as Secretary-General – and this is my eleventh visit to Israel.

I wanted to use this opportunity to meet with leaders in both Israel and Palestine to discuss the way forward. I also appreciate the chance I had earlier today to meet with innovators at Tel Aviv University who are working to build a better tomorrow.

Mr. President,

A better tomorrow also means a future free from violence.

The latest appalling terror attack in Tel Aviv is a vivid example. I offer my deepest condolences to the victims and their families.

Stabbings, shootings and bombings will not achieve anything because violence is never a solution.

Such acts are precisely designed to breed fear and uncertainty. They eat away at trust and hope, drive Palestinians and Israelis farther apart, and strip away a sense of empathy for one another.

I must be equally clear that nearly 50 years of occupation has had a devastating impact on Palestinian lives, undermining the belief in a peaceful resolution to this conflict. It also has not brought security for Israelis.

Leaders on both sides need to urgently take concrete steps to restore hope and a political horizon so that the Israeli and Palestinian people see a pathway to peace, not a quagmire of recurring violence.

I firmly believe that a negotiated two-state solution remains the only viable option to prevent perpetual conflict and to achieve the legitimate aspirations of both peoples.

I am encouraged by the recent international and regional engagement.

The Middle East Quartet is completing a balanced and fair report on the situation and the obstacles to the two-state solution.

Once it is published, I encourage Israeli and Palestinian leaders to engage with the Quartet on its recommendations and on creating the conditions for the resumption of meaningful negotiations.

Let me assure you, Mr. President, that the United Nations stands ready to support all efforts in achieving this goal.

Mr. President, I also want to take this opportunity to recognize your leadership in the fight against intolerance and for inclusion. Your words and actions reflect your deep commitment to ensuring that all Israelis, of all backgrounds, are treated with dignity and respect.

Mr. President, I count on your courage and leadership to take the bold actions that will establish a just, comprehensive and lasting peace for the people of Israel and Palestine.

Finally, let me add that I welcome today's announcement of the normalization of relations between Israel and Turkey. This is an important and hopeful signal for the stability of the region.

*Toda* . Thank you.

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