THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS AT JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

WITH H.E. MR. Benjamin Netanyahu,

PRIME MINISTER OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Jerusalem, 28 June 2016

Thank you for your very warm welcome and very kind words about the United Nations.

I know you are just back from Rome. Let me start by commending your leadership in restoring full diplomatic relationship with Turkey. The countries of the region need more dialogue and this is a welcome step and a hopeful sign.

Mr. Prime Minister, I am pleased to be in Israel for my 11th visit as Secretary-General, the exact same number I have visited my home country, Korea. There are not many countries I have visited this many times. Yesterday, I had the pleasure of visiting Tel Aviv University where I met researchers and entrepreneurs developing innovative solutions to some of the world's biggest challenges.

I am proud that, during my term as Secretary-General, cooperation between Israel and the United Nations has deepened in a variety of fields, including the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition, just this month, the Permanent Representative of Israel, Ambassador Danny Danon, was elected chair of one of the six main committees of the General Assembly of the United Nations, comprised of all member states. I am very happy to see that Israel has been expanding its presence and role in the United Nations during the last 10 years in fact, [inaudible] I'm not claiming any credit for this, but this recognition on the role of Israel in the United Nations is very encouraging.

Mr. Prime Minister,

My last visit to Jerusalem last October took place during the peak of the recent wave of violence. The frequency of terror attacks and clashes have decreased.

Yet we must not mistake short-term quiet for a long-term solution. We must not allow difficulties to become excuses for inaction.

The risk of renewed violence remains high, and, sadly, attacks continue, such as the deadly shooting in Tel Aviv earlier this month.

Stabbings, vehicle rammings and shootings have only one name: terrorism.

Incitement to such acts and glorification of their perpetrators are unacceptable and must stop.

But, Mr Prime Minister, security measures alone can never be enough to resolve the underlying causes of the cycles of violence that the Israeli and Palestinian people have been struggling with.

To do that you need hope, you need a political horizon, you need leadership that is committed to peace and a just and lasting solution.

We cannot ignore key underlying causes of violence: growing Palestinian anger, the paralysis of the peace process, and nearly a half century of occupation. [None] of these causes justify terror. They can only be resolved through bold political action.

After nearly ten years as Secretary-General I can proudly say that I have always been a committed friend of Israel. I have worked hard to show in word and in deed my sincere friendship for Israel.

My conversations with you, Mr Prime Minister, have helped me understand Israel's frustrations and fears. The frustration that sometimes your country is held to a different standard at the United Nations. The fear that your country and people are under constant threat.

At the same time, Mr. Prime Minister, I encourage you to take the courageous steps necessary to prevent a one-state reality of perpetual conflict that is incompatible with realising the national aspirations of the Israeli and Palestinian people.

No solution to the conflict will be possible without the recognition that both Palestinians and Jews have an undeniable historic and religious connection to this land.

No solution can come through violence, it must be based on mutual respect and the recognition of the legitimate aspirations of both peoples.

No solution can be imposed from the outside, it must be based on direct negotiations on the final status issues.

The international community can and must support all of these efforts. I pledge my full commitment. This may be my last year as Secretary-General, but I will work until the last minute of my mandate for peace, security and justice and dignity for the people of Israel and Palestine.

Thank you. Toda.

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