The Palestinian Cabinet Meeting Brief Statement

The Palestinian Cabinet condemned the Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip, reiterates its calls for mobilizing support for the PLO on the 14th commemoration of the martyrdom of Yasser Arafat, and hails convening the meetings of the joint Palestinian-Russian ministerial committee

During its weekly meeting held in Ramallah today, the Palestinian Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Dr. Rami Al- Hamdallah,

- **C**ondemned the serious Israeli military escalation against the Gaza Strip and bombing dozens of sites and buildings, including a residential building, several houses and facilities, Al Aqsa TV and Al Amal Hotel. This attack resulted in killing more than 10 Palestinian citizens in less than 24 hours in a flagrant violation of the rules of international law and humanitarian resolutions of the international legitimacy. The Cabinet held the Israeli Government fully responsible for the ongoing attacks on the Gaza Strip. *"This aggression would not have happened without the international ongoing silence and ignorance to the illegal acts of Israel, the Occupying Power, and the ultimate support of the Trump administration especially the US State Department that justifies the Israeli killings of innocent, defenseless citizens as self-defense,"* The Cabinet Stated. *"Continuing Israeli war crimes and escalating the aggression against defenseless Palestinian citizens, who have been suffering from a long-lasting siege aim at dragging the region towards further violence and instability. Therefore, we call upon the international community and the UN, including the UN Security Council, to withdraw the political and legal immunity given to Israel. We also demand free nations to intervene immediately to stop the killings of Palestinian civilians and military escalations, to provide urgent and immediate international protection for the Palestinian nation, and to lift the unjust siege imposed on the Gaza,"* The Cabinet added.

- **S**tressed that commemorating the 14th martyrdom of President Yasser Arafat in Palestine and the diaspora confirms our commitment and dedication to follow his path in steadfastness and resistance until implementing the right of return of Palestinian Refugees and achieving the dream of an independent, sovereign State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital on the 1967 borders. The Cabinet confirmed the urgent need to continue the efforts of President Yasser Arafat in defending the just rights of the Palestinian nation. On this occasion, the Cabinet reiterated its calls to mobilize support for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Yet, the Cabinet renewed calls to overcome the misguided projects, and conspiracies that aim at liquidating the Palestinian fundamental rights, and to protect the Palestinian issue through ending the internal political division, and achieving national reconciliation between Palestinian factions.

- **C**ondemned the decision of Israel, the Occupying Power, for approving the establishment of new 792 settlement units in occupied Jerusalem. The Cabinet stressed that such demolition and evacuation decisions affect the Palestinian citizens, especially in the so- called "Areas C" upon the E1 colonial plan, which comes as part of a strategy that threatens the establishment of the future State of Palestine, and its geographical interdependence. *"Israel, the Occupying Power, continues its defiance and disregard of the international legitimacy resolutions, persists to consolidate its racist settlement project, tightens its control over the West Bank, including occupies Jerusalem, and perpetuates its occupation to prevent the establishment of an independent State of Palestine. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the international community to compel Israel to stop theft of Palestinian land for building more colonial settlements,"* The Cabinet stated.

- **D**iscussed the outcomes of PM Al-Hamdallah participation in the Paris Peace Forum, held in the French capital, on the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. During his speech at the Forum, Al-Hamdallah reiterated that the Palestinian leadership, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, is committed to the two-state solution upon the international legitimacy with the objective of establishing an independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital. Al-Hamdallah also stressed the need to implement all UN resolutions preserving the Palestinian struggle to achieve peace.

Further, Al-Hamdallah called for endorsing President Mahmoud Abbas peace initiative, which was announced during his speech at the United Nations General Assembly and called for creating a multilateral international mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations to resolve all permanent status issues within a specific timeline and to embody the sovereignty of the State of Palestine. Moreover, Al-Hamdallah expressed his sincere appreciation for the French efforts in creating a multilateral international mechanism. In his speech, the Prime Minister also referred to all Israeli violations against the Palestinian citizens and their land that run contrary to the resolutions of the international legitimacy, including the establishment of illegal settlements that jeopardize the territorial contiguity of the State of Palestine and consider East Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Yet, the confiscation of land, demolition of homes, forcible displacement and transferring of Palestinian families from their properties, and imposing a siege on the Gaza Strip. Al-Hamdallah also draw attention to the importance of empowering the Palestinian economy and strengthening its contribution in the global economy. Al-Hamdallah, in addition, stated that the Palestinian economy is still suffering from the Israeli occupation measures and control, as well as the restrictions of the Protocol on Economic Relations, the Paris Protocol, which was supposed to be a temporary agreement. Therefore, PM Al-Hamdallah intensified the need to completely disengage from the reliance on the Israeli economy, build our own economic capacity and achieve an independent national Palestinian economy.

In a different context, PM Al-Hamdallah demanded world countries to provide support to the UNRWA amid its current financial burden to ensure the continuation of its services to the Palestinian refugees. Al-Hamdallah also expressed his rejection to all misguided American decisions targeting the Palestinian refugees, particularly cutting the financial support to the UNRWA and changing the status of Jerusalem in a way that increases the instability of the region. *"Is it fair for the Palestinian citizens to commemorate the 70th anniversary of their forcible displacement, transfer, and exile while the world is celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is a compass to promote the values of justice, and human dignity?"*Al- Hamdallah stated. "Victory to achieve peace is possible through the promotion of freedom, justice and equality values, not through power, control and arrogance.

- **H**ailed the meetings of PM Al-Hamdallah with different officials from Arab and foreign countries at the Paris Peace Forum, during which he discussed the latest political and economic developments, as well as the various challenges facing Occupied Palestine, especially the continuous Israeli violations. Upon his arrival to Paris, Al-Hamdallah met French President Emmanuel Macaron, and the UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres as well as his Spanish counterpart Mr. Pedro Sanchez. Al-Hamdallah raised the issues of Israeli colonial escalation and steps taken by the Israeli occupation government to undermine the two-state solution. From this Forum, Prime Minister Al-Hamdallah called upon the United Nations to support the hospitals of East Jerusalem in light of the US administration aid cut-offs and encouraged Spain to recognize the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

- **E**xpressed its deep gratitude to France for contributing 8 million euros in support of the Palestinian Government public budget. The Cabinet commended the generous support of France, particularly to the vital sectors in Palestine, including water, energy, education and the private sector in terms of facilitating loans and grants to support and develop private Palestinian enterprises.

- **D**iscussed a report from the Ministerial Committee for Dialogue on the Social Security Law, which referred to the intensive program and meetings held with various relevant bodies, including civil and private institutions. The Committee commended the positive atmosphere and the high responsibility of various bodies as well as discussions and ideas to be considered for further investigation to achieve satisfactory results for all related parties. The Cabinet confirmed that the Government is committed to the timeline it announced for commencing the Social Security Law on 19/11/2018 for companies with 200 workers or more and until 19/4/2020 for companies with 1-4 workers. The Cabinet also stressed that upon the instructions of President Mahmoud Abbas and PM Hamdallah, the Committee will submit the outcomes and recommendations of its discussions with all

parties on certain articles of the law to the Cabinet for necessary legal actions that ensure the sustainability, fairness and transparency of the Social Security Fund. The cabinet stated also that the Social Security Law secures employment safety for the poor and marginalized segments of the society and for hundreds of thousands of workers in the private sector and all other sectors to which the law applies.

- **F**ollowed up on a report submitted by the Minister of National Economy regarding the meeting outcomes of the Joint Palestinian-Russian Committee for Trade and Economic Cooperation that included emphasizing the importance of enhancing joint Palestinian-Russian partnership in various fields, increasing trade exchanges through meetings and holding discussions between different private sector institutions in both countries. Further, the meeting included signing a road map for the development of trade and economic cooperation during the period between 2019 until 2021, which aims at developing and strengthening economic relations and promoting Palestinian- Russian products as well as assisting commercial institutions in expanding exchange of information and stimulate the economic activity of Palestinian and Russian companies.

- **R**eviewed a report from the Ministry of Public Works and Housing on implementing the Italian projects in the Gaza Strip as part of the reconstruction process. The report mentioned:

  - Finishing the implementation of all self-financing projects to repair 281 apartments across the Strip at a value of 1.2 million euros.

  - Completing the rehabilitation of 17 residential buildings in Al Nada neighborhood for 1 million euros.

  - The renovation of 4 residential buildings in Al-Nada Towers area at a cost of half a million euros.

  - The reconstruction of 11 residential buildings with 75 residential units in Al Nada Towers area, at a cost of 4.2 million euros.

  - Signing contracts for the infrastructure rehabilitation project of Al Nada area for 1.1 million euros, and the reconstruction project of the Italian complex for 3.7 million euros.

  - The reconstruction of 12 new residential buildings with 111 housing units estimated at 3.2 million euros.

- **N**oted that Ministry of Public Works and housing is not able to finish the reconstruction of 2,100 housing units due to the lack of funding, stressing that the major reason behind delays in the reconstruction process is the siege imposed on the Strip, which prevents the entry of needed goods and raw materials for reconstructing the Strip. The Cabinet also noted that the ongoing political division prevents the Palestinian Government from conducting its tasks and duties in the Strip. In this context, the Cabinet assured that the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian Government, under the supervision of President Mahmoud Abbas, have exerted its utmost efforts over the past few years to meet its responsibilities in the Gaza Strip, and have mobilized funding and implemented development projects. The Cabinet reaffirmed that the only way to end the suffering of the Palestinian citizens in the Gaza Strip is to immediately end the political division and achieve national reconciliation to empower the Government in achieving its functions in the Gaza Strip.

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