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PHROC and PNGO Welcome UN Security Council's Resolution No. 2334

The Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council (PHROC) and Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) welcome the UN Security Council's Resolution no. (2334) of 2016 on Israel's continuing construction and expansion of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and praises the position of Venezuela, Malaysia, Senegal and New Zealand. These countries insisted on putting forward the draft resolution before the Security Council for a vote, constituting actual practice of their international responsibilities under the international law and principles of justice.

There is no doubt that issuing this resolution comes at a time when Israel intensifies its efforts in expanding its colonization project and recently seeks legalizing the random settlement outposts and allowing colonizers and Israeli forces to seize private Palestinian lands. This expresses the international community's increasing concerns over Israel's ongoing violations of international law and international legitimacy.

This resolution added nothing to the previous international resolutions, particularly Security Council's resolutions no. (237) of 1967; (446) of 1979 and (465) of 1980. However, issuing the 2334 resolution after two decades of the intentional disregard for the confrontation of the Israeli violations of the international legitimacy and inalienable Palestinian human rights is considered a turning point in the international political will and restores hope for the enforcement of international law. Thus, we believe that the Security Council's resolution no. (2334) constitutes the basis for activating various international mechanisms, especially that powerful countries voted in favor of the resolution while the USA abstained.

In view of the above, we stress the following:

1. (Israel's) denial, non-obedience, and challenge of the resolution through taking illegal and oppressive measures in addition to attacking the UN and countries solely and collectively should not depress the international organizations, countries and civil society. (Israel's) arrogance expresses the need for mobilizing official and unofficial efforts and taking steps on the ground to confront the Israeli ongoing violations. (Israel's) denial of this resolution does not exempt other countries from

fulfilling their obligations under the international law. Thus, this resolution should be a trigger to apply the international mechanisms that would ensure the enforcement of international will and law.

2. The resolution's current call for Israel to completely and immediately stop its settlement activities and fulfill its legal obligations towards the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, should not only be limited to decisions and statements. Moreover, although this demand did not match what was mentioned in the Security Council's Resolution no. (465), which called upon Israel to dismantle the existing settlements, the issuance of Resolution No. (2334) with vote of 14 in favor and the USA's abstention opens the door to the possibility of developing the resolution into practical steps.
3. Building Israeli settlements in the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal. In addition, condemning the construction of settlements and calling for stopping settlement activities result in international legal responsibilities, including, but not limited to, actual measures to be taken by countries solely or collectively in a way that does not differentiate between the occupied territory and (Israel) as mentioned in the last resolution. These measures should oblige those countries to stop offering any form of assistance to (Israel) that would invest that assistance in the settlement activities as stipulated in resolution 465/1980;
4. The issuance of the UN resolution after two decades of negligence against previous international resolutions, which have probably included more sophisticated texts, under the pretext of giving a chance for Oslo Peace Negotiations unveils the importance of enhancing the role of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestinian civil society in following up the application of the resolution through encouraging the countries to fulfill their obligations towards the resolution or to not at least violate it. Therefore, the biggest achievement of this resolution should not be its wording, but should remind of the responsibilities to be fulfilled by the countries solely and collectively and of reconsidering the strategy of condoning (Israel's) violations under the pretext of not hindering the peace process. It should be noted that commitment to the peaceful solution of the conflict does not mean the non-application of international accountability mechanisms that are considered a basic element of a just and lasting peace process.
5. Until the resolution 2334 forms a basis for more international effective position towards unambiguously recognizing our people's right to liberation, independence and return and practicing pressure and imposing sanctions on (Israel); we are required to promote the Palestinian struggle against the occupation. Therefore, we call upon the PLO to invest this accomplishment by calling the temporary PLO leadership to comprehensively restructure the Palestinian situation to create a unified national strategy, put an end to the catastrophic division and restore the Palestinian cause as a national liberation project, reform the PLO, including the national council, on democratic basis.