

'Jerusalem is not for sale' Palestinian President Abbas tells world leaders at UN Assembly

Taking the podium at the United Nations General Assembly, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas reiterated that peace in the Middle East cannot be realized without an independent Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Addressing world leaders at the Assembly's annual general debate, President Abbas underscored his commitment to peace and the two-state solution, and the path of negotiations to achieve them.

"We have always fully and positively engaged with the various initiatives of the international community aimed at achieving a peaceful solution between us and the Israelis, including the Arab Peace Initiative," he said, noting that the he also engaged with United States President Donald Trump and his administration from the start of his tenure.

However, the US administration's decision to close office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Washington D.C., the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and transferring of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, not only violate UN resolutions, they have also undermined the two-state solution, added President Abbas.

"The path to peace is enshrined in your [the UN] resolutions, including resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority and refers to the State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders," he stressed, urging all countries to abide by those resolutions.

More to follow...

Cyprus President urges collective leadership to address 'root causes' of world's crises

"Blatant violations of international [law](#)" were foremost on the mind of Nicos Anastasiades, President of Cyprus, as he brought the issue to the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, urging States to readjust their policies in "hope for a better future."

"As a leader of a small country, which suffers for more than 44 years by the blatant violations of international law, let me repeat the well-known causes which explain all these unacceptable and disappointing results, registered both at the regional and global level," he said.

The Cyprus President enumerated reasons, from expansionist interests against territorial integrity to military investments for profit, and financing terrorism to "narrow and blind economic" considerations that have rendered more than 20 million people in urgent need of assistance.

He added to the list, "inflexible policies" that prevent authorities from providing medical care and special interests that hinder the [Paris Agreement](#), which deals with greenhouse-gas emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance to address climate change.

Mr. Anastasiades also criticized short-term moves to lock up migrants.

"Instead of facing the root causes leading to massive migratory flows of millions of people, we contend ourselves in setting up immigration detention centres," he stated, noting that "hunger and distress, which intensify migration flows, create demographic changes and exert huge economic and social pressures to all countries or regions affected."

In addition to "a lack of credibility, trust and even legitimacy of our decisions," he stated, "all [of] the above, in addition to the inability to effectively implement the resolutions of the UN, have led to unprecedented crises," such as displacement, destruction of cultural heritage, and human and drug trafficking.

Despite diverging aspirations or conflicting interests, Mr. Anastasiades urged the world leaders to rise up "to meet our shared responsibility, reverse our policies of the political expediencies...adopt a more proactive, targeted and results-oriented approach and address the root causes that have led to this unprecedented situation."

He called collective leadership and the primacy of multilateralism "the only way forward" to eliminate threats to peace and security.

"In a fragmented and multipolar world, we have more than ever the moral, ethical and political duty to promote the essence of human civilization, unite our strength to maintain international peace and security and establish the conditions which would bring prosperity and welfare for all," Mr. Anastasiades maintained.

Looking closer to home, he said a viable and lasting settlement to what he referred to as "the Cyprus problem" would be to the best interest of the people of Cyprus, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and their aspiration to live in a normal and prosperous European country, fully independent and free from any foreign dependencies.

"At the same time, I remain convinced that the solution of the Cyprus problem will undoubtedly have a very important collateral influence on achieving and maintaining a much-needed environment of stability and peace in the region,"

he said.

[Full statement available here.](#)

'Path to peace' on Korean Peninsula only possible through diplomacy and full denuclearization: US tells Security Council

If the leadership of North Korea follows a diplomatic path to end its nuclear weapons programme, then a "much brighter future lies ahead" for its people, the US Secretary of State told the Security Council on Thursday.

Mike Pompeo, chairing a ministerial-level meeting convened by the United States on North Korea, officially known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), said that "final, fully-verified denuclearization" was essential.

Saying that the world was at the "dawn of a new day" over the Peninsula, Mr. Pompeo said "the Korean people, the region, and the world, will never realize the full promise of the future, if we do not seize this unprecedented diplomatic opening for peace."

He said that North Korea leader Kim Jong-un, and President Donald Trump – following their historic summit in Singapore – "share a common, personal understanding of what must take place" to transform relations between the two countries, adding that he'd had a "positive meeting" with his DPRK counterpart on Wednesday, and work was well underway for a second leaders' summit.

But on the implementation of Security Council resolutions which include punitive economic sanctions against North Korea, he said the US had evidence that a cap on petroleum imports to DPRK, had been "breached", and illegal coal imports were continuing. He claimed that some members of the Security Council had been complicit with breaking an embargo on hosting North Korean labourers, in violation of sanctions.

China raises possibility of sanctions relief

China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, told the Council that his country welcomed the diplomatic efforts by the US and the Republic of Korea, or South Korea, towards denuclearization and lasting peace. He said that an "end of war" declaration to officially cease hostilities from the Korean War, would help

build trust, and he called for six-party multilateral talks to continue.

On sanctions, he said that it was equally important to advance the political process. He said that the Council should consider allowing a relaxation of some economic sanctions, if North Korea was in compliance: "Given the positive developments...China believes that the Security Council needs to consider invoking in due course, this provision to encourage DPRK and other relevant parties, to move denuclearization further ahead."

'Critical role' of Security Council

The foreign ministers of both South Korea, and Japan, were invited to brief the Council, in addition to the 15 members. For the Republic of Korea, Kang Kyung-wha, said the Council had played "a critical role" in adopting sanctions, to pressure DPRK to the negotiating table.

"In the last few months, it has taken a series of 'for the first time' actions, that were unthinkable, only a year ago," she said. "We are committed to continuing to work with the international community, to ensure that the Council's sanctions are faithfully implemented, even as we continue to engage North Korea, to facilitate substantial progress towards complete denuclearization."

Japan's foreign minister, Taro Kono, said international unity was "critical" and agreed with the US that the petroleum sanctions cap on imports, had been breached. "It is important that all Member States immediately stop supplying these products to North Korea", he said.

He said that together with reports of other sophisticated attempts to evade sanctions, using ship-to-ship transfers and the selling of fishing rights, it meant that "the very authority of the decisions made by this Council, is at stake."

Reject passivity and embrace 'responsibility for our future,' Lithuania's President tells UN Assembly

Multilateralism and cooperation must be the focus of dialogue between United Nations Member States as Lithuania's President warned against 'nationalism and division' at the General Assembly on Thursday.

Highlighting the reality of the world we live in today and drawing on

examples from the past and present, President Dalia Grybauskaitė said that even though multilateral institutions exist to protect the world's citizens, "we must recognize that we, the Member States, have the power and resources to enable United Nations to stand up for freedom, equality and humanity."

"We cannot let the voices of nationalism and division win over dialogue and cooperation," she cautioned world leaders gathered for the Assembly's annual general debate.

She went on to say that "before we seek to destroy multilateral institutions, commitments and agreements, we must know what we want to build instead."

"So far, we have been too quiet, too passive, too ignorant."

Multilateral and world Organizations, including the UN Security Council are 'not perfect,' and it is up to the countries that make up the United Nations to work together, she declared, closing with: "We are the UN, so let's take responsibility for our future, empowering the UN to act."

[Full statement available here.](#)

[Deputy UN chief hails 'political courage' of Latin American countries 'to confront and end genocide'](#)

A 50 million Euro investment aimed at helping to end the scourge of femicide – where women and girls are killed just because of their gender – was announced at United Nations Headquarters on Thursday, thanks to the 'political courage' of a group of Latin American countries, said the UN deputy chief.

[Amina Mohammed](#) was speaking at a high-level event to launch the [Spotlight Initiative](#) in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

She described the joint UN-European Union initiative as "a bold and comprehensive response to the tragedies that we see across the world every day", aimed at ending violence against women and girls.

"These five countries have shown the political courage to confront and end femicide – a crime that claims the lives of 12 women a day, in Latin America," said the Deputy Secretary-General.

"Given the pervasive, universal, and entrenched nature of violence against women and girls, we knew that we would need to combine our individual efforts

if we were to succeed,” she added.

Latin America is home to 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide in the world and an astonishing 98 per cent of gender-related killings, go unprosecuted.

Ms. Mohammed said that the 50 million Euro investment would help tighten up laws and policy initiatives to curb unchecked violence against women and girls, strengthen institutions and promote gender equality overall.

It will also “provide quality services for survivors, and reparations for victims of violence and their families, producing disaggregated data so we can leave no one behind and empower women’s movements in the five priority countries.”

“Addressing femicide comprehensively from each of these angles is essential to successful and lasting results,” she added.

The UN deputy chief paid tribute to Mariana Lima – killed by her police officer husband in 2010 – and her mother, Irinea Buendía, who challenged the Mexican legal system for six years until her daughter’s murderer was brought to justice, and paid tribute to a survivor of a brutal attack, who was in the meeting at UN Headquarters, Natalia Ponce de León. She thanked her for her courage, “coming here to be with us to remind us that we will not stay silent until we end violence against women.”

“We need to end impunity for perpetrators and ensure that no woman or girl experiences violence either in the home, from a partner, or in any public space including from gangs, traffickers or others,” said Ms. Mohammed.

More to come on this story later.