



EU Statement by

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Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the
Occupied Territories**

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Mr Chairman,

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania* and the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by reaffirming the commitment of the European Union to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict through a two-state solution and an agreement that ends the occupation which began in 1967, ending all claims and fulfilling the aspirations of both parties, including Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, on the basis of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and internationally agreed parameters. The EU's firm and united position on these Resolutions and parameters has been set out in detail on numerous occasions. We reaffirm our readiness to work with both parties and our partners in the region and the international community towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations to resolve all final status issues and to achieve a just and lasting peace.

In line with international law, including Resolution 2334 (2106), the EU has consistently reiterated its strong opposition to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context. The EU calls on Israel to halt continued settlement expansion, including East Jerusalem, especially in sensitive areas such as Har Homa, Givat Hamatos and E1, which severely threatens the two-state solution and seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both States. The EU has also made clear that it will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. We expect both parties, to act in accordance with international law.

The EU has welcomed the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and a number of countries, namely the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco. The EU believes that these developments represent a positive contribution to peace and stability in the Middle East.

The political and security situation in Gaza remains volatile, and the humanitarian situation continues to be a matter of grave concern. All violence, including the firing of rockets into Israel from Gaza, reminds us that restoring a political horizon for peace is essential to reducing violence and containing extremism in the region. We reiterate our call upon Israel to respect the fundamental

* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

right to peaceful protest, as well as our call upon Hamas to ensure that protests remain strictly non-violent. We call once again upon all parties to take urgent steps in line with Resolution 2334 leading to a fundamental change in the humanitarian, political, security and economic situation in Gaza, including through an end to the closure policy, full opening of crossing points, and humanitarian access, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. Such steps would implement Resolution 2334 (2016) and would increase the chances for a two-state solution

The *Palestinian Legislative Council* was dissolved in December 2018. Strong, inclusive, accountable and functioning democratic Palestinian institutions based on the respect for the rule of law and human rights are vital for the two-state solution. In this context, a date should be set for national elections in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip. The EU calls upon all Palestinian factions to unequivocally commit to democratic principles prior to elections.

Successful negotiations between the parties are possible, as we had seen when an arrangement had been reached on tax revenue transfers. The agreement shows that progress can be made, if there is political will. Both parties should be courageous to use such political will to advance a two-state solution.

Mr. Chair,

It is still possible to reach peace based on the two-state solution if credible steps are taken. Ultimately, and as the EU has said previously, it is the lack of implementation of international law that is the real challenge to the achievement of peace and security in the Middle East. Progress towards a solution to this conflict would also have an impact on efforts to resolve other crises in the region.

Thank you