

Statement

by



Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia

Director General, ICWA

**on commemoration of
'International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People'**

at

New Delhi

29 November, 2013

Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, H.E. Mr. Adli Shaban Hassan Sadeq, Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Dr. Peter E. Kenmore, FAO Representative in India and Dr. Mazin Al.Masoudi, In-charge of the League of Arab States Mission, Excellencies, members of diplomatic corps, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,



(L-R) H.E. Mr. Adli Shaban Hassan Sadeq, Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Shri E. Ahamed, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India, Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, DG, ICWA and Dr. Peter E. Kenmore, FAO Representative

On behalf of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), India's prestigious foreign policy think tank with a rich legacy, I warmly welcome you all to this special event. On a personal note, it is a real pleasure for me to host this commemoration of 'International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People' on the second occasion during my innings here as DG.

2. As an institution, we express our support and solidarity with the people of Palestine. As a country, India has been in the forefront of upholding and advocating the Palestinian cause and in developing multi-dimensional cooperation and partnership with Palestine.

3. West Asia has been a region of immense interest to ICWA. Earlier in the year, we hosted an international conference entitled ‘The Arab World: March Towards Democracy and its Implications’, which was a serious attempt to evaluate various facets of the Arab Spring and its future prospects and implications. Much has happened since then. Last month, we organized a Roundtable on ‘Middle East: Prospects for Peace’ where the keynote speaker was an exceptional personality – Mr. Terje Rod-Larsen, President of the International Peace Institute and the former Deputy Prime Minister of Norway. He shared with our scholars and guests an insightful view of developments in the region and their impact on progress (or lack of it) in the task of realizing the two-state solution.

4. In our view, it is an apt moment today to reflect on the repercussions of complex developments that have been unfolding in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Iran, among others, in order to judge for ourselves whether we are heading closer to the solution of the Palestinian problem. If this is not the case, what should be done by the national, regional and international role players? Whatever may be the answer to this all important question, everyone might agree that there is a pressing need for crafting and promoting consensus within peoples, states, the region, and among the major international players who have a direct stake in West Asia today. I shall not hold forth beyond this, as we have assembled a distinguished group of speakers for you. Like you, I would prefer to listen and absorb.

5. Let me share with you the sequence of statements. First, Dr. Peter E. Kenmore will deliver the message of the UN Secretary-General. This will be followed by presentation by Dr. Mazin Al.Masoudi on behalf of the League of Arab States Mission. Then Ambassador Adli Shaban Hassan Sadeq will address you. Finally, our esteemed Hon’ble Minister of State for External Affairs will deliver the Keynote Address.

6. Dear friends, please join your hands in welcoming our distinguished panel on this important day of solidarity with the Palestinian people.
