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Letter dated 18 November 1988 from the Permanent Representative of
Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of November 1988, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 16 November 1988 addressed to you by Dr. Riyad Mansour, Deputy Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations, together with annexes containing the Political Communiqué of the Palestine National Council and the Declaration of Independence of 15 November 1988.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdullah SALAH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX I

Letter dated 16 November 1988 from the Deputy Permanent Observer
of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Political Communiqué of the Palestine National Council and Declaration of Independence of 15 November 1988 (see annexes II and III).

(Signed) Dr. Riyad MANSOUR
Deputy Permanent Observer
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX II

Political Communiqué

In the land of heroic Algeria and as the guest of its people and its President, Chadli Bendjedid, the Palestine National Council held its nineteenth extraordinary session - the session of the intifadah (uprising) and national independence, the session of the martyr and hero Abu Jihad - from 12 to 15 November 1988.

The session culminated in the declaration of the Palestinian State on our Palestinian land, representing the natural culmination of a valiant and tenacious popular struggle which has continued for more than 70 years and taken its toll in the immense sacrifices made by our people in its homeland, on its frontiers and in all the camps and places to which it has been dispersed.

The session was also distinguished by its dedication to the great Palestinian national uprising, one of the outstanding battle events in the history of the Palestinian people's contemporary revolution, together with our population's legendary and epic defiance in their camps both inside and outside our occupied land.

Since the very beginning of the intifadah and throughout the 12 months for which it has continued, the fundamental characteristics of our great people's uprising have been clearly manifest. It is an all-embracing popular revolution expressing the consensus agreement of the nation - its men and its women, its old people and its children, its camps, villages and cities - to reject the occupation and to fight for its defeat and elimination.

This magnificent uprising has demonstrated the deep-rooted national unity of our people and its comprehensive loyalty to the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the sole legitimate representative of our people - of all our people in every place where its members are gathered - both inside and outside the homeland. This has been shown by the rallying of the Palestinian masses in all their national institutions - including trade unions, vocational organizations, students, workers, farmers, women, businessmen, land owners, professionals and academics - to the intifadah, through the unified leadership of the uprising and through the popular committees which have been formed in all quarters of the cities and in the villages and camps.

The revolutionary furnace of our people and its glorious uprising, together with the continuous and creative revolutionary momentum of our revolution at all the scenes and sites of that revolution both inside and outside our homeland, have brought to nought the wagers and delusions whereby our people's enemies hoped to give a fixed and permanent character to the occupation of our Palestinian land and to consign the question of Palestine to the labyrinths of oblivion and obliteration. Behold the generations which have been bred on the purposes and principles of the Palestinian revolution and have lived through all its battles since its awakening in 1965, experiencing the heroic defiance of the Zionist

invasion in 1982 and the resistance of the camps of the revolution in Lebanon against the siege of starvation and death. And behold how these generations, the sons of the Palestine Liberation Organization, affirm the vitality and continuity of that revolution and make the ground explode beneath the feet of the occupiers, proving that the battle reserves of our people are not depleted and that its deep faith is firm and profound.

Thus we see a revolutionary symphony among the children of the rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and the children of the sacred stones, both inside and outside our occupied land.

Our people has defied all attempts by the enemy authorities to put an end to our popular revolution, despite all the authorities' ploys of terror, oppression, killing, imprisonment, expulsion, desecration of Islamic and Christian holy places, violation of the freedom of places of worship, confiscation of land, demolition of houses, perpetration of deliberate crimes of murder, unleashing of armed settlers against our villages and our camps, burning of crops, severing of water and electricity supplies, beating of women and children, use of stinging gases - leading to thousands of deaths and miscarriages - and conduct of a policy of obscurantism through the closure of schools and universities.

Our people has paid the price for this heroic defiance with the lives of hundreds of martyrs and the sufferings of tens of thousands who have been wounded, injured, detained and expelled. The ingenuity of our people has always throughout these trying times been ready to invent ways and means of battle which enhance its defiance and resistance, its ability to confront the crimes and practices of the enemy and, consequently, to continue its heroic and determined struggle.

By means of its defiance, the continuation of its revolution and the escalation of its uprising, our people has proved its determination to continue the struggle, whatever the sacrifices, to the utmost limits. It does so armed with a magnificent fighting heritage, an unbending revolutionary determination and a deep-rooted national unity which has been further and further strengthened through and around the intifadah, both inside and outside the homeland, together with its all-embracing loyalty to its national leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the adherence of our people to the objectives of defeating and eliminating the Israeli occupation and attaining its inalienable national rights to return, to exercise self-determination and to establish the independent Palestinian State.

Our people has throughout this process relied on the support of the masses and forces of the Arab community, their solidarity with it and backing of it. This has been demonstrated in the broad popular Arab support received by the uprising, in the official Arab consensus expressed during the Arab Summit Conference at Algiers and the resolutions adopted at that Conference, affirming that our people is not alone in confronting the racist Fascist assault and thwarting any possibility of its isolation by the Israeli aggressors, in view of the support provided to it by the Arab community and their backing of its holy war.

In addition to this Arab solidarity, our people's revolution and the glorious uprising have enjoyed broad international endorsement, as demonstrated by the increasing understanding of the Palestinian people's cause, the growth of backing and support among the peoples and nations of the world for our just struggle and, in contrast, their condemnation of the Israeli occupation and its crimes, thus contributing to the disgrace of Israel, its increasing isolation and the isolation of its backers and supporters.

Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) and those General Assembly resolutions which confirm Palestinian rights against the expulsion of Palestinians from their land, and against the repression and terror practised by Israel against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, have constituted one of the strong manifestations of international public opinion's increasing support, including that of official opinion, for our people and its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, against the Israeli occupation and its racist Fascist practices.

General Assembly resolution 43/21 of 3 November 1988, which was adopted at a meeting devoted to the intifadah, provides further evidence that the overwhelming majority of the peoples and nations of the world oppose the occupation and support the just struggle of the Palestinian people and its inalienable right to liberation and independence. The inhuman and abhorrent crimes and practices of the occupation have given the lie to the Zionist propaganda about democracy in the Zionist entity, which has deceived international public opinion for 40 years. The true face of Israel has been made apparent: a colonialist, racist, Fascist State based on the seizure of Palestinian land, extermination of the Palestinian people and, in addition, threats, aggression and expansionism in neighbouring Arab territories.

What this means is that the occupation can no longer continue to reap its fruits at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people unless it pays the price for doing so, either in the field or at the level of international public opinion.

Apart from those Israeli democratic and progressive forces which have rejected the occupation, condemned it, and deplored its oppressive practices and measures, Jewish groups throughout the world are no longer able to continue defending Israel or to remain silent about its crimes against the Palestinian people. Many voices have been raised within these groups in calls for an end to such crimes and for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, in order to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination.

Among the gamut of results and effects at the local, Arab and international levels of our people's revolution and glorious uprising, there has been affirmation of the practical correctness of the Palestine Liberation Organization's national programme, which advocates defeat of the occupation, the right to return, self-determination and the independent State. It has also been affirmed that our people's struggle is the decisive factor in ensuring that our national rights are wrested from the claws of the occupation and that it is the authority of the popular masses, as represented by their committees, which controls the situation and confronts the occupation authority and its crumbling apparatus. It has also

been affirmed that the international community is now more than ever prepared to help bring about a political settlement of the Middle East problem and the basis of that problem, the question of Palestine, and that the Israeli occupation authorities, with the United States Administration behind them, cannot maintain their policy of no response to the will of the international community, which is today agreed on the need to hold the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to enable the Palestinian people to attain their national rights, including first and foremost the right to self-determination and to exercise its national independence in its own territory.

Accordingly, in corroboration of our people's defiance and its glorious uprising, in response to the will of our masses inside and outside the occupied homeland, and in faithful memory of those who have been killed, injured and detained, the Palestine National Council decides as follows:

1. With regard to the intensification and continuation of the uprising:

- (a) To provide all means and possibilities for the intensification of our people's uprising, at all levels and by all methods, with a view to ensuring its continuation and escalation;
- (b) To support the mass institutions and organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories;
- (c) To strengthen and develop the popular committees and the specialized cadres of the masses and the trade unions, in order to enhance their effectiveness and role, including attack groups and the popular army;
- (d) To consolidate the national unity which has displayed itself and taken root during the uprising;
- (e) To step up action at the international level with a view to securing the release of detainees, the return of those expelled and a halt to the operations of official organized repression and terror against our children, our women, our men and our institutions;
- (f) To invite the United Nations to place the occupied Palestinian territories under international supervision, in order to protect our masses and to terminate the Israeli occupation;
- (g) To call on the Palestinian masses outside the homeland to intensify and increase their support and to base such action on family solidarity;
- (h) To invite the masses, forces, institutions and Governments of the Arab community to increase their political, material and media support to the uprising;
- (i) To call on free and noble men throughout the world to stand by our masses, our revolution and our uprising in opposing the Israeli occupation, its methods of repression and organized official military Fascist terrorism, as practised by the forces of the occupation army, armed individuals and fanatic settlers against our

masses, our universities, our schools, our institutions, our national economy and our Islamic and Christian holy places.

2. In the political field:

Pursuant to all the preceding remarks, the Palestine National Council - in accordance with its responsibility towards the Palestinian people, its national rights and its desire for peace, on the basis of the Declaration of Independence issued on 15 November 1988, and as an expression of the humanitarian desire to strive for the reinforcement of international détente, nuclear disarmament and the settlement of regional disputes by peaceful means - affirms the determination of the Palestine Liberation Organization to reach a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of its essence, the question of Palestine, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles and provisions of international legitimacy, the rules of international law, the resolutions of the United Nations - the most recent being Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) - and the resolutions of the Arab summit conferences, in a manner that ensures the right of the Palestinian Arab people to return, to exercise self-determination and to establish its independent national State on its national soil, while also making arrangements for the security and peace of every State in the region.

With a view to putting this affirmation into practice, the Palestine National Council insists on the following:

- (a) The need to convene an effective international conference on the subject of the Middle East problem and its essence, the question of Palestine, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict in the region, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing, with the provision that the said international conference shall be convened on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and shall guarantee the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, first and foremost among which is the right to self-determination, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the right to self-determination of peoples, the inadmissibility of seizure of land belonging to others by means of force or military invasion, and in accordance with United Nations resolutions concerning the question of Palestine;
- (b) Israel's withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories which it has occupied since 1967, including Arab Jerusalem;
- (c) Cancellation of all measures of attachment and annexation and removal of the settlements established by Israel in the Palestinian and Arab territories since the year 1967;
- (d) An endeavour to place the occupied Palestinian territories, including Arab Jerusalem, under United Nations supervision for a limited period, in order to protect our people and to provide an atmosphere conducive to a successful outcome

for the international conference, the attainment of a comprehensive political settlement and the establishment of security and peace for all through mutual acceptance and satisfaction, and in order to enable the Palestinian State to exercise its effective authority over those territories;

(e) Solution of the Palestine refugee problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions on that subject;

(f) Assurance of freedom of worship and the practice of religious rites at the holy places in Palestine for adherents of all religions;

(g) The Security Council's establishment and assurance of arrangements for security and peace among all the concerned States in the region, including the Palestinian State.

The Palestine National Council confirms its previous resolutions with regard to the privileged relationship between the two fraternal peoples of Jordan and Palestine, together with the fact that the future relationship between the States of Jordan and Palestine will be established on the basis of a confederacy and of free and voluntary choice by the two fraternal peoples, in corroboration of the historical ties and vital common interests which link them.

The Palestine National Council renews its commitment to United Nations resolutions affirming the right of peoples to resist foreign occupation, colonialism and racial discrimination, and their right to struggle for their independence. It once again states its rejection of terrorism in all its forms, including State terrorism, and affirms its commitment to its previous resolutions in that regard, to the resolution of the Arab Summit Conference at Algiers in 1988, to General Assembly resolutions 42/159 of 1987 and 40/61 of 1985, and to the relevant passage in the Cairo Declaration issued on 7 November 1985.

3. On the Arab and international levels:

The Palestine National Council affirms the importance of the unity of the territory, people and institutions of Lebanon and of decisive opposition to attempts to partition that territory and to divide the fraternal people of Lebanon. It also affirms the importance of the joint Arab effort to help solve the crisis in Lebanon and thus to participate in elaborating and applying the solutions which will preserve its unity. The Council also affirms the importance of recognizing the rights of Palestinian citizens in Lebanon to conduct political and media activities and to enjoy security and protection, of action against all forms of conspiracy and aggression directed against them and their right to work and to live, and of the need to establish all the conditions which ensure their ability to defend themselves and to maintain their security and protection.

The Palestine National Council also affirms its solidarity with the Lebanese Islamic national forces in their struggle against the Israeli occupation and its agents in southern Lebanon. It expresses its pride in the militant solidarity between the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples in opposing aggression and putting an end to the Israeli occupation of parts of the south. It further affirms the

importance of promoting that relationship between our masses and the fraternal fighting masses of Lebanon.

On this occasion, the Council salutes in admiration those of our people in the camps in Lebanon and the south of that country who are resisting aggression and standing up to the massacres, killings, starvation, destruction, air raids, bombardment and sieges being conducted by the Israeli forces, the Israeli air force and the Israeli navy against Palestinian camps and Lebanese villages, being assisted as they do so by the client forces in the region. It also salutes their rejection of the settlement conspiracy, because the homeland of Palestinians is Palestine.

The Council affirms the importance of the Iraq-Iran cease-fire decision for the attainment of lasting peace between the two countries and in the Gulf region. It calls for the intensification of efforts to ensure the successful outcome of the peace negotiations and to establish peace on a firm and stable basis, affirming on this occasion the pride of the Palestinian Arab people and of the Arab community as a whole in Iraq's fraternal defiance and its victories as it defends the eastern gate of the Arab world.

The National Council also expresses its deep pride in the backing provided by the masses of our Arab community for the struggle of our Palestinian Arab people and in their support for the Palestine Liberation Organization and the uprising of our people in the occupied homeland. It affirms the importance of strengthening the relations of struggle among the forces, parties and organizations of the Arab national liberation movement, in defence of the rights of the Arab community and its masses to liberation, progress, democracy and unity. The Council calls for the adoption of all measures which will reinforce militant unity among all parties to the Arab national liberation movement.

The Palestine National Council, in addressing its greetings and gratitude to the Arab States for their support of our people's struggle, calls upon them to honour the commitments adopted at the Algiers Summit Conference to support the struggle of the Palestinian people and its glorious uprising. In making this request, the Council expresses its great confidence that the leaders of the Arab community will continue to provide backing and support for Palestine and its people in the manner which has become familiar to us.

The Palestine National Council reaffirms the desire of the Palestine Liberation Organization to maintain Arab solidarity as a framework for the organization of efforts by the Arab community and its States to confront Israeli aggression and United States support for such aggression and to promote Arab prestige and the desired Arab role, with a view to influencing international policies in favour of Arab rights and issues.

The Palestine National Council expresses its profound gratitude to those States, forces and world organizations which support Palestinian national rights and affirms its desire to strengthen links of friendship and co-operation with its friends (the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China), the other socialist States, non-aligned countries, Islamic, African and Latin American States and other

friendly countries. The Council is pleased to note the manifestations of a positive development in the positions of certain Western European countries and Japan with respect to increased support for the rights of the Palestinian people, and backing for that people. It welcomes that development and urges the promotion of efforts to extend it.

The National Council affirms the fraternal solidarity of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organisation with the struggle for liberation and greater independence of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It condemns all attempts by the United States to threaten the independence of countries in Central America and to interfere in their affairs.

The Palestine National Council expresses the support and backing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation for the national liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), and addresses a special greeting to Nelson Mandela in his struggle against the racist Pretoria régime. It urges that the peoples of those two countries be enabled to attain their freedom and independence. The Council also expresses its support and backing for the African front-line States and its condemnation of the racist South African régime's acts of aggression against them.

As it watches with deep concern the continuing growth of Fascist forces and Israeli extremism, and the escalation of their overt calls for implementation of a policy of genocide and the individual and collective expulsion of our people from its homeland, the Council calls for the intensification of action and efforts at all levels to confront this Fascist threat. At the same time, the Council expresses its appreciation of the courageous role played by the Israeli forces for peace in their defiance and humiliation of the Fascist and racist forces and of aggression, in their support for our people's struggle and valiant uprising and in their endorsement of our people's right to exercise self-determination and to establish its independent State. The Council affirms its previous resolutions with regard to the strengthening and development of relations with those democratic forces.

The Palestine National Council also addresses an appeal to the various forums of the people of the United States to endeavour to halt the United States Administration's policy of denying the national rights of the Palestinian people, including its sacred right to self-determination. It calls upon all sectors of the United States population to work towards the adoption of policies which are consistent with international rules, conventions and resolutions on the subject of human rights and serve the desired purpose of bringing about peace in the Middle East and ensuring security for all its peoples, including the Palestinian people.

The Council entrusts the Executive Committee with the task of completing arrangements for the formation of a memorial committee in honour of the martyr and symbol, Abu Jihad, in order that the committee may begin its work immediately after the Council's session is concluded.

The Council addresses its greetings to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to fraternal and

friendly international institutions and organisations and non-governmental organisations and to those correspondents and information media which have supported, and continue to support, our people's uprising and struggle.

The National Council, in expressing its intense anguish over the continued detention of hundreds of our people's combatants in a number of Arab countries, vehemently deplores their continued detention and calls upon those countries to put an end to this irregular situation and to release the combatants in order that they may resume their participation in the fight and in the struggle.

In conclusion, the Palestine National Council affirms its complete confidence that the justice of the Palestinian cause and of the aims for which the Palestinian people is struggling will continue to enjoy increased support from honourable and free men throughout the world. It also affirms its complete confidence in victory on the road to Jerusalem, the capital of our independent Palestinian State.

Resolution

The National Council records with the utmost pride, gratitude and recognition the consistent firm stance adopted by fraternal Algeria, its great people and its militant President, Chadli Bendjedid, in support of the just struggle being waged by the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. That noble stance is based on the deep-rooted battle heritage of the revolution which claimed 1,500,000 martyrs and on Algeria's profound commitment to the Arab and Islamic cause.

The National Council, in addressing its gratitude to the people, Party, Government and President of Algeria for their hospitality to the National Council during the historic session of the intifadah, and for its provision of all the facilities which ensured the successful outcome of its work, is certain that the adoption of the National Council's historic resolutions in Algeria, the land of victorious revolution and deep commitment to the victory of Palestine, will have the most profound effect on the spirit of our militant people, the people of the intifadah, and on the hearts of all free and honourable men in our world.

Special resolution of the Palestine National Council relating to Tunisia, as proposed by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization

The Palestine National Council affirms its deep appreciation of and great pride in fraternal Tunisia, its people, Government and President, in view of the warm and brotherly way in which they have embraced the cause of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Palestine National Council addresses greetings of respect and admiration to President Zine-al-Ab'dine Ben Ali for his sincere and persistent efforts to support the cause of the Palestinian people, to protect the Palestine Liberation Organization in Tunisian territory and to defend it in all international contexts and forums.

The Council expresses its deep gratitude and recognition to the heroic people of Tunisia, which has always co-operated with the cause of the Palestinian people, its revolution and uprising, embracing those issues within the framework of its own national cause.

ANNEX III

Declaration of Independence

On the same terrain as God's apostolic missions to mankind and in the land of Palestine was the Palestinian Arab people brought forth. There it grew and developed, and there it created its unique human and national mode of existence in an organic, indissoluble and unbroken relationship among people, land and history.

With epic tenaciousness in terms of place and time, the people of Palestine fashioned its national identity. Its steadfast endurance in its own defence rose to preternatural levels, for despite the ambitions, covetousness and armed invasions which deprived that people of an opportunity to achieve political independence, and which were prompted by the allure of this ancient land and its crucial position on the intersecting boundaries of powerful nations and civilizations, it was the constancy with which the people adhered to the land that gave that land its identity and which imbued its people with the national spirit.

Nourished by many strains of civilization and a multitude of cultures and finding inspiration in the texts of its spiritual and historical heritage, the Palestinian Arab people has, throughout history, continued to develop its identity in an integral unity of land and people and in the footsteps of the prophets throughout this Holy Land, the invocation of praise for the Creator high atop every minaret while hymns of mercy and peace have rung out with the bells of every church and temple.

From generation unto generation, the Palestinian Arab people has not ceased its valiant defence of its homeland, and the successive rebellions of our people have been a heroic embodiment of its desire for national independence.

At a time when the modern world was fashioning its new system of values, the prevailing balance of power in the local and international arenas excluded the Palestinians from the common destiny, and it was shown once more that it was not justice alone that turned the wheels of history.

The deep injury already done the Palestinian people was therefore aggravated when a painful differentiation was made: a people deprived of independence, and one whose homeland was subjected to a new kind of foreign occupation, was exposed to an attempt to give general currency to the falsehood that Palestine was "a land without a people". Despite this falsification of history, the international community, in article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations of 1919 and in the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, recognized that the Palestinian Arab people was no different from the other Arab peoples detached from the Ottoman State and was a free and independent people.

Despite the historical injustice done to the Palestinian Arab people in its displacement and in being deprived of the right to self-determination following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947, which partitioned Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish State, that resolution nevertheless continues

to attach conditions to international legitimacy that guarantee the Palestinian Arab people the right to sovereignty and national independence.

The occupation of Palestinian territory and parts of other Arab territory by Israeli forces, the uprooting of the majority of Palestinians and their displacement from their homes by means of organized intimidation, and the subjection of the remainder to occupation, oppression and the destruction of the distinctive features of their national life, are a flagrant violation of the principles of legitimacy and of the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions recognizing the national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and the right to self-determination, independence and sovereignty over the territory of its homeland.

In the heart of its homeland and on its periphery, in its places of exile near and far, the Palestinian Arab people has not lost its unwavering faith in its right to return nor its firm belief in its right to independence. Occupation, carnage and displacement have been unable to dispossess the Palestinians of their consciousness and their identity - their epic struggle has endured, and the formation of their national character has continued with the growing escalation of the struggle. The national will has established its political framework; and that is the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as recognized by the international community and represented in the United Nations and its institutions and in other international and regional organizations. Founding itself on a belief in inalienable rights, on the Arab national consensus and on international legitimacy, the Palestine Liberation Organization has assumed leadership in the battles of a great people fused in an exemplary national unity and in a legendary and steadfast resistance to carnage and encirclement within its homeland and outside. To the Arab national consciousness and to that of the entire world, the epic of the Palestinian resistance has manifested itself as one of the most conspicuous national liberation movements of the age.

The great popular uprising now mounting in the occupied territories, together with the legendary steadfastness of the camps within and outside the homeland, have raised mankind's grasp of the true nature of the Palestinian issue and of Palestinian national rights to a level higher than that of full and mature comprehension, have brought down the final curtain on an entire epoch of falsification and conscientious indifference and have beleaguered the official Israeli mentality, prone as it is to appeal to arguments based on mythology and to resort to intimidation in its denial of Palestinian existence.

With the uprising, with the escalation of the revolutionary struggle and with the accumulation of revolutionary experience wherever the struggle is in progress, the Palestinian conjuncture reaches a sharp historical turning point. The Palestinian Arab people asserts once more its inalienable rights and its demand to exercise those rights in its Palestinian homeland.

By virtue of the natural, historical and legal right of the Palestinian Arab people to its homeland, Palestine, and of the sacrifices of its succeeding generations in defence of the freedom and independence of that homeland,

Pursuant to the resolutions of the Arab Summit Conferences and on the basis of the international legitimacy embodied in the resolutions of the United Nations since 1947, and

Through the exercise by the Palestinian Arab people of its right to self-determination, political independence and sovereignty over its territory:

The Palestine National Council hereby declares, in the Name of God and on behalf of the Palestinian Arab people, the establishment of the State of Palestine in the land of Palestine with its capital at Jerusalem.

The State of Palestine shall be for Palestinians, wherever they may be, therein to develop their national and cultural identity and therein to enjoy full equality of rights. Their religious and political beliefs and human dignity shall therein be safeguarded under a democratic parliamentary system based on freedom of opinion and the freedom to form parties, on the heed of the majority for minority rights and the respect of minorities for majority decisions, on social justice and equality, and on non-discrimination in civil rights on grounds of race, religion or colour or as between men and women, under a Constitution ensuring the rule of law and an independent judiciary and on the basis of true fidelity to the age-old spiritual and cultural heritage of Palestine with respect to mutual tolerance, coexistence and magnanimity among religions.

The State of Palestine shall be an Arab State and shall be an integral part of the Arab nation, of its heritage and civilization and of its present endeavour for the achievement of the goals of liberation, development, democracy and unity. In affirming its commitment to the Pact of the League of Arab States and its concern for the strengthening of joint Arab action, the State of Palestine calls upon the members of the Arab nation for their assistance in achieving its de facto emergence by mobilizing their capacities and intensifying the efforts made to bring the Israeli occupation to an end.

The State of Palestine declares its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the policy and principles of non-alignment.

The State of Palestine, in declaring that it is a peace-loving State committed to the principles of peaceful coexistence, shall strive, together with all other States and peoples, for the achievement of a lasting peace based on justice and respect for rights, under which the human potential for constructive activity may flourish, mutual competition may centre on life-sustaining innovation and there is no fear for the future, since the future bears only assurance for those who have acted justly or made amends to justice.

In the context of its struggle to bring peace to a land of peace and love, the State of Palestine calls upon the United Nations, which bears a special responsibility towards the Palestinian Arab people and its homeland, and upon the peace-loving States and peoples of the world and those that cherish freedom to assist it in achieving its goals, in bringing the plight of its people to an end, in ensuring the safety and security of that people and in endeavouring to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

The State of Palestine further declares, in that connection, that it believes in the solution of international and regional problems by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions adopted by it, and that, without prejudice to its natural right to defend itself, it rejects the threat or use of force, violence and intimidation against its territorial integrity and political independence or those of any other State.

On this momentous day, the fifteenth day of November 1988, as we stand on the threshold of a new era, we bow our heads in deference and humility to the departed souls of our martyrs and the martyrs of the Arab nation who, by virtue of the pure blood shed by them, have lit the glimmer of this auspicious dawn and who have died so that the homeland might live. We lift up our hearts so that they may be filled with light from the radiance of the hallowed uprising, of the epic resistance of those in the camps, in the dispersion and in exile, and of those who have borne the banner of freedom: our children, our elders and our youth; our prisoners, detainees and wounded based on the hallowed soil and in every camp, village and city; the valiant Palestinian women, the guardians of our life and our survival and keepers of our eternal flame. To the spirits of our righteous martyrs, to the masses of our Palestinian Arab people and our Arab nation and to all free and honourable men, we give our solemn pledge to continue the struggle for an end to the occupation and the establishment of sovereignty and independence. We call upon our great people to rally to the Palestinian flag, to take pride in it and to defend it so that it shall remain forever a symbol of our freedom and dignity in a homeland that shall be forever free and the abode of a people of free men.

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

"Say: 'O God, Master of the Kingdom, Thou givest the Kingdom to whom Thou wilt, and seizest the Kingdom from whom Thou wilt, Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt; in Thy hand is the good; Thou art powerful over everything ...'"

Almighty God has spoken the truth
