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ADDRESS

BY

**H.E. MR. RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

TO THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 66th SESSION OF THE
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I warmly and respectfully greet you all and hope that the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly will yield fruitful results.

I would like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on his assumption of the Presidency and also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss for his time as the President of the General Assembly.

We are passing through a period, when both the international community and the United Nations are tested in an unprecedented manner.

However, I feel obliged to state very frankly that today the United Nations does not demonstrate the leadership necessary to help mankind prevail over its fears for the future.

Therefore, the UN has to reform itself and renew its vision with a view to protecting the universal rights of humanity as a whole, rather than acting upon the interests and remaining under the guardianship of certain countries.

Last month in Somalia, for instance, I witnessed in person how the UN and the international community remained helpless against the pressing problems of today. It is impossible for me to put into words the poverty and suffering I have seen in Somalia.

The tragedy of Somalia, where tens of thousands of children died due to the lack of even a piece of bread and a drop of water, is a shame for the international community.

The civil war which has continued on for the last 20 years has wiped out all the resources and livelihood of Somalia... The Somali people are gradually being dragged to death before the eyes of the world...

Today, the international community is watching the suffering in Somalia like a movie.

However, we should urgently face this situation which is a test to our humanity.

While doing so, we should not only look into the picture of today, but also the shameful history that has led Somalia into the arms of this great tragedy.

Indeed, beneath the tip of this huge iceberg lie great crimes against humanity.

In that respect, the situation in Somalia has also revealed the deep wounds inflicted by the colonialist mentality which kept Africa under its hegemony for centuries.

As this old colonial understanding ignores places where it has no interest, it is now watching millions of children die in need of a morsel of bread.

I will be frank. No one can speak of peace, justice and civilization in the world if the outcry rising from Somalia is left unheard.

No word is sufficient to describe the agony going on there.

Turkey's approach towards Somalia or any international issue is grounded firmly on humanitarian principles.

This is why we have launched a comprehensive aid campaign for Somalia with the strong support of our nation.

We have collected a donation of about 300 million USD within the last two months. Furthermore, the amount of our humanitarian assistance surpassed the level of 30 million USD until now.

We also organized an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul and the amount of pledges made on this occasion exceeded 350 million USD.

Along with emergency humanitarian aid, Turkey is also determined to help build the infrastructure facilities that will enable this country to stand on its feet.

In this context, Turkey has undertaken a wide spectrum of projects ranging from transportation to health and education, from agriculture to fishery and construction, including the construction of roads, hospitals, schools and water wells.

By re-opening of our Embassy in Mogadishu, we have also showed the world that claims of security challenges cannot be an excuse for delaying assistance.

In parallel to these, it is also necessary to urgently bring to an end the civil war and provide the country with a democratic and unified governance in order to succeed in the fight against piracy and terrorism originating from Somalia.

In this regard, we would like everyone to ask themselves why the international community deprives Somalia of the interest that it has shown to conflict areas elsewhere in the world.

The entire international community should act with a sense of utmost urgency to support the efforts to build peace and stability in Somalia.

The civil war smothering our Somali brothers for 20 years should come to an end without any further delay.

In this context, the progress achieved recently by Somali leaders towards building national consensus gives us hope for the future.

As Somalia takes its well-deserved place within the international community, the world will become a safer and more stable place

It is precisely this understanding that lies at the heart of Turkey's rigorous efforts towards Somalia.

We are making every effort to carry out infrastructure investments that will enable Somalia to stand on its feet. We are also working unrelentingly to help provide an environment of political stability and peace conducive to sustainable development.

We are not doing this with any other intention but for our humanitarian responsibilities.

It is our greatest wish that the leadership demonstrated by Turkey in this direction will set an example for the entire international community.

Mr. President,

For us the United Nations symbolizes an ideal which must uphold international law and justice over sheer force and oppression; peace over conflict; and the conscience of humanity over parochial interests.

The biggest obstacle preventing the realization of this ideal is the Arab-Israel conflict which has continued more than half a century. The failure to resolve this conflict and in its stead, sacrificing law and justice at every occasion for the sake of political sensitivities deal a great blow to the sense of international justice.

Israel has not complied with 89 binding resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council on this issue up to date. In addition to that, there are hundreds of General Assembly resolutions which have been totally disregarded by Israel. Even worse, the UN is not able to take any step to stop the human tragedy suffered by the Palestinian people.

This situation causes great dismay on the part of the international community. At present, it is obvious that this conflict can no longer remain unresolved and that the international community must act urgently to heal this bleeding wound.

In this regard, it is obvious that the problem stems from the Government of Israel. This country's leaders are building new barriers to peace each day, instead of taking the necessary steps towards peace.

In this context, illegal settlements, which are still under way in the occupied territories of Palestine despite the calls by the international community, and the blockade on Gaza stand out in particular.

As we have stated before, the leaders of Israel must make a choice.

The loopholes of the UN system and certain lobby groups in some countries help Israel to evade international law and justice for its illegitimate actions. However, this will not yield the security that Israel needs most today.

The leaders of Israel must understand that real security can be possible only through building genuine peace.

I would like to call upon Israel once again from this rostrum:

“Nothing can be a substitute for peace. What we are faced with today is not a simple “peace for security” equation. You must better analyze the new political and social landscape emerging in the Middle East and realize that it is not possible to sustain the state of perpetual conflict and confrontation.”

As the international community, if we believe in the ideal of building international peace and security, the founding principle of the UN, then it is necessary to compel Israel to peace despite its own leaders and demonstrate clearly that this country is not above the law.

The most important step that needs to be taken in this direction is to meet the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people for being recognized as a state and to allow the representatives of the State of Palestine to take their well-deserved place in this august Assembly, as a member of the UN.

Turkey's support to the recognition of the State of Palestine is unconditional.

Turkey is ready and willing to exert every effort to help build peace in the Middle East. In this regard, we will continue to work actively for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for the recognition of the State of Palestine, for the attainment of inter-Palestinian unity and for the lifting of the illegal blockade enforced against the people of Gaza.

This commitment is not only a natural extension of our vision for regional peace and stability or our commitment to international law and justice, but it also emanates from our sense of responsibility against humanity.

Likewise, the reaction we have shown towards Israel, which killed nine innocent civilians during its attack against a humanitarian aid convoy in international waters, is yet another manifestation of this stance.

Turkey has never pursued hostile and confrontational policies against any other country. On the contrary, we have always followed a foreign policy based on cooperation and friendship. Israel is no exception to this.

However, Israel has made a grave mistake against a country and its people, which have shown only friendship to it throughout history, and insisted on not realizing its mistake.

Our demands from Israel are known. Our position will not change unless Israel takes the necessary steps to redress its mistake and meet our demands.

I wish to stress in particular that we have no problem with the Israeli people. The problem emanates from the aggressive policies of the Israeli government. In fact, with the previous Israeli governments, we have worked constructively and made progress on many issues. Whereas now, the source of the tension is merely and solely the current Israeli government.

Turkey is a responsible and trustworthy country, whose friendship and cooperation is sought in the international arena. We will never make any concessions from this principled and determined policy.

Mr. President,

We are witnessing a historic process of transformation and change in the Middle East. From the very first days of the outbreak of events, we made a clear call to the regimes in the region.

“Lend an ear to the calls of your people for democracy. Because, the ultimate source of legitimacy for every government is, above all, the people and its will. What needs to be done is to ensure the materialization of the people's will in a free and open manner.

“We have also said that sovereignty belongs to the nation. Sovereignty which does not rest on the nation’s will is not legitimate.

“Sovereignty does not allow any leader or any regime to repress its own people or kill innocent civilians. A regime pointing guns to its own people can have no sovereignty or legitimacy.

“Today, everyone must understand that times have changed. At present there can be no place for governments which do not meet the legitimate needs and expectations of its people, point guns to its citizens, and choose oppression instead of justice and law.”

We are happy to see that our calls have been heeded in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, opening up the way to a democratic transformation process in line with the legitimate demands of the people. This is giving us hope for the future.

However, we observe with regret that there are still countries, which stay behind the events and act with wrong reflexes due to their outdated state of mind.

It is in this context that we follow closely the developments unfolding in our neighbor Syria. We have warned the Syrian leadership on several occasions upon witnessing the regrettable acts of the Syrian regime against its own people, which are of great concern for all of us.

Only friends can speak the bitter truth. Indeed, we acted in line with this principle and told our Syrian friends that they have to lend an attentive ear to the call of the Syrian people for democracy, that no regime pointing guns to its own people can survive, and that oppression does not yield prosperity.

However, the Syrian leadership has resisted heeding our warnings. Now, every drop of blood spilt is tearing apart the Syrian leadership from its people.

Turkey will continue to support the democratic demands of the peoples, both in Syria and other countries, and encourage regimes to take steps in this direction. We expect and urge the international community to do the same.

In this regard, our close cooperation with Tunisia and Egypt to this end continues unabated. Likewise, having already provided all kinds of support to the National Transition Council in Libya, Turkey today feels proud to be the first country to appoint its Ambassador to the new Libya.

We will continue to be the staunch supporter of this new Libya, which takes her well-deserved place in the UN as a democratic, united and independent state.

During my visit to Libya last week, I went to Tripoli, Tajura, Misurata and Benghazi. I have seen in person that the Libyan people were rightly proud of their revolution.

I have also witnessed the destruction in Misurata.

I now want to call upon the entire international community to be very sensitive on the following points:

Libya belongs to the Libyans. So does Libya’s rich resources.

At a time democracy is being established in Libya, the country's frozen assets abroad should be released immediately so that Libya can stand on its own feet and that they do not suffer from poverty while they have all the necessary resources.

Libyan people are strong enough to determine their own future. Their choices must be respected.

Mr. President,

In Cyprus, a fair, comprehensive and lasting solution must be found to this long overdue problem, which has lasted more than half a century.

The UN plan put forward in 2004 has demonstrated that the parameters of a solution are there but that the Greek Cypriot side lacks the necessary will to make it a reality.

On the other hand, the Turkish Cypriot side has still not been freed from the isolation imposed upon her, even though she has always expressed her full determination towards a solution.

Despite this, the Turkish Cypriot side has remained committed to a peaceful solution and participated with good will in the negotiations resumed under the auspices of the UN.

The objective is to finalize the negotiations until the end of this year, have the settlement plan endorsed in simultaneous referenda at the beginning of next year, and thus enable a united new Cyprus to take her place in the EU without further delay.

Turkey will continue to provide every support to reach a solution as soon as possible, in line with this timetable.

However, I would like to emphasize that, if the intransigent attitude of the Greek Cypriot side does not permit this to happen, we will not let the future of the Turkish Cypriots to remain uncertain forever.

At this critical juncture we can also not accept any attempt by the Greek Cypriot side to act as if they are the sole representative of the Island or have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots.

In this regard, the attempts by the Greek Cypriot side to unilaterally determine maritime jurisdiction areas and to engage in oil and natural gas exploration activities in these fields are extremely irresponsible both in terms of timing and possible outcomes.

In the face of these unilateral activities of the Greek Cypriot side, which appear to aim at provoking a crisis, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot side will act with common sense but will also protect resolutely their rights emanating from international law.

At this point, we expect all the concerned parties to work actively to ensure that the Greek Cypriot Administration halts these activities which can lead to tension not only on the Island, but also in the entire region. Otherwise, we will do whatever is necessary.

Mr. President,

The illegitimate invasion of Azerbaijani territories, which has been going on for years now, has to end. It is unacceptable to let the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remain unresolved as such.

Finding solutions to international problems before they become acute is a political and moral responsibility for all of us. In this respect, more effective efforts have to be exerted to resolve the Kashmir conflict and many other frozen disputes which I don't have time to name here.

On the other hand, the road to peace and stability in the Balkans goes through the recognition of Kosovo's independence.

Mr. President,

Turkey has always been a staunch supporter of the principles and goals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

I believe that we showed our commitment in this respect during our non-permanent membership in the Security Council in 2009-2010. I also believe that our effective performance during that period serves as a testament for what we intend to do if elected to Security Council for the years 2015-2016.

In this regard, I would like to use this opportunity to underline once again that we count on the support of all the members of the General Assembly for Turkey's candidacy to a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period of 2015-2016.

As yet another manifestation of our support to UN goals, we are also determined to pursue the Istanbul Action Plan adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which we hosted in Turkey early this year.

We are also continuing our efforts to put into practice, as soon as possible, the package of economic and technical cooperation that we declared for the Least Developed Countries.

As part of this package, which include many areas of cooperation ranging from trade to education, agriculture to energy, we are aiming to provide these countries with an annual assistance of 200 million USD.

We also envisage increasing our direct investments in these countries to 5 and 12 billion USD in 2015 and 2020 respectively.

In our mind, security, development and respect for human rights are integral parts of the same whole and thus constitute the most fundamental guarantee for lasting peace.

Turkey will continue to work towards the attainment of these fundamental objectives of the UN and exert every effort to leave a safer and more prosperous world to future generations.

Thank you.