

**ADDRESS BY  
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*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Distinguished Heads of Delegation,

Members of the General Assembly:

Thank you. It is an honour to join this eminent gathering. Allow me to offer Jordan's sincere congratulations to His Excellency Vuk Jeremic. Your Excellency, be assured of Jordan's full cooperation. And Mr Secretary General, may I also express, to you, Jordan's appreciation for your untiring efforts.

I welcome your voice, and the voices of world leaders of many religions, who stand with billions of Muslims worldwide, in rejecting provocations meant to divide those of different faiths. Islam teaches us to honour all human beings, promote tolerance, and show mercy. As a Hashemite, and a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed, peace and blessings be upon him, I

condemn all acts that vilify the name of the Prophet, or falsely use his name or the name of Islam or any other religion for that matter, to justify violence and evil acts, such as we have recently witnessed. There are no sidelines on this issue. All of us, of every faith, everywhere, must be pro-active in promoting understanding and a much stronger global dialogue.

My friends,

'To unite our strength.' These four words, in the United Nations Charter, are not just an old dream. They are a modern urgency. The U.N., and this General Assembly - empowered and strong - are needed today as never before.

In my region, we have important tasks ahead. To provide new and better opportunities for our people, especially our youth. To avert the dangers of regional instability and conflict. And to fulfill the universal desire - the basic human right - to live in freedom, dignity, justice, and peace. The international community has a crucial interest in supporting countries that are taking risks for peace and for reform.

In Jordan we have charted our course guided by our heritage of mutual respect and moderation. Our Arab Spring

journey is one of opportunity, to accelerate home-grown reforms and achieve national goals.

Last year, I stood before you and spoke about the reforms that were on the horizon. Since then, new and comprehensive constitutional amendments, as well as new laws, have created a matrix of institutions and principles to support our path of reform and democratisation. And with the new year, we will have our new parliament, and our Jordanian Summer will begin.

My friends,

I would like to address the tragic situation in Syria. Violence must end immediately and a transition must begin now. There is no alternative to a political solution, that will end the bloodshed, restore security and stability, and preserve the territorial integrity of Syria and the dignity and unity of its people. The U.N. has an important part to play in helping people commit to a political solution. Jordan will do all in its power to support the newly appointed representative of the Secretaries General of the UN and Arab League, Mr Lakhdar Brahimi.

The peoples of Jordan and Syria have long and deep ties. Since the current crisis erupted, over 200-thousand Syrians have

sought refuge in Jordan. This has put heavy pressure on our limited resources and our economy. Yet we as Jordanians have opened our arms, as we have many times in the past for others in need. As we continue to shoulder this responsibility, international support is essential. We are very grateful for the generous response of governments, international bodies, and dedicated U.N. organisations. The somber reality is, however, that more will be needed, as the camps grow more crowded with vulnerable families and the cold desert winter approaches. I call upon the countries of the United Nations to work together to prevent a humanitarian disaster.

My friends,

While we deal with these challenges, we must never lose focus on the crisis at the heart of the region. For almost sixty-five years, the Palestinian people have been the exception to the U.N. promise. The shelter of international law and human rights: except ... not yet. The dignity of living in freedom and security: except ... not yet. The right to self-determination: except ... not yet. Enough.

As the Arab Spring demanded dignity for all, so it demanded the end of exceptionalism. No single issue causes greater anger than to tell an entire people that when it comes to global justice, they don't count. The Arab Summer cannot bear its full fruit, until the Palestinian-Israeli conflict ends, and ends with a just peace - and a Palestinian state living side by side with a secure Israel at peace with the entire region.

Earlier this year, in Amman, we succeeded in getting both sides back to the table for exploratory talks. Then positive traction stopped again. Illegal settlement-building and unilateral actions continue, constituting direct threats to a negotiated peace.

We are extremely concerned by threats to Jerusalem and the sanctity of its Muslim and Christian holy sites. The Al-Aqsa Mosque and Compound - Al-Haram Al-Sharif of East Jerusalem - is under Hashemite custodianship, a special role recognised by the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty, and protected as occupied territory by international law. It is Islam's third holiest site, and its importance to 1.7 billion Muslims, one quarter of the world's population, is similar to the importance of the Ka'aba itself. Let

me be absolutely clear, any invasion or division of the site of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa would be viewed, not only as a breach of Israel's obligations, but as profound religious transgression. The international community must send a clear message that such a transgression - or any attempt to erase the Arab, Muslim, or Christian identity of Jerusalem - will not be tolerated.

What is needed now is the full weight of our nations, united. Neither the parties nor the world can afford continued hostility and insecurity. There may be a rare window of opportunity, later this year, after the U.S. elections, to achieve what both sides so urgently need: two states, at peace, Palestine and Israel - both secure, both free to look forward - on the basis of a just, comprehensive, and final settlement. This has always been and will remain a foremost priority for Jordan.

Let me say here, as I have said before, that the Arab world is seeking peace, real peace. Diplomatic relations. Economic relations. Trade. Investment. A new normality, in peace, where people are safe in their homes ... where communities are able to build ... and where cooperation helps the entire region prosper. All this has been on offer since 2002 - over ten years - under the

Arab Peace Initiative ... through which 57 Arab and Muslim countries have reached out, collectively, to Israel. It is time for Israel to turn around, look to the future we share, and make a just and lasting peace with the Palestinians.

My friends,

Almost 70 years ago, countries from every continent chose to come together in hopes of a world united in peace and respectful of all humankind. After a bitter, destructive global war, the United Nations was the right step, the brave step.

Today, almost three generations later, we have learned that it is not enough to make the right choices. We must also pursue effective action. Not only as nations, but as nations united, we must take the right steps, the brave steps, now.

Thank you.