

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**



**STATEMENT BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY**

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**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

**AT THE 72<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Honorable Mr. President,  
Honorable Secretary General,  
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,  
Esteemed Delegates,

I greet you with respect on behalf of myself and my country.  
I would like to thank Mr. PETER THOMSON for his successful work over the past year as the President of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly.

I congratulate Mr. MIROSLAV LAJČÁK, who has taken over the Presidency of the General Assembly.

I hope that this year's Session of the General Assembly convening with the theme of "FOCUSING ON PEOPLE: STRIVING FOR PEACE AND A DECENT LIFE FOR ALL ON A SUSTAINABLE PLANET" will bring goodness to all of the world's peoples.

Honorable Mr. President,  
Esteemed Delegates,

Unfortunately, global peace and stability have regressed further since our meeting in this hall last year.

We continue to see the ugly face of terror and war in different corners of the world. Terrorists, fed by the environment of conflict, continue their acts, spreading them across different regions.

We are anxiously observing the violent actions of radical currents converging on xenophobia, cultural racism and animosity against Islam.

The most effective way of reversing this negative outlook would be to engage in sincere cooperation here under this roof.

We need to develop a new perspective to promote world peace.

No crisis and no threat can be resolved by leaving it to play out on its own.

We all have to shoulder responsibility for a safer and more prosperous world.

It is with this understanding that Turkey is pursuing an enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy.

Honorable Mr. President,  
Esteemed Delegates,

The Syrian conflict, entering its seventh year, has created deep wounds in the country, the region and the whole world.

In Syria, a civilization is being annihilated together with civilians and innocent children.

Destroying this country and being fed by instability and oppression, terrorism spreads like a cancer across borders.

The Syrian people who took action demanding democracy, freedom, justice and a bright future were unfortunately left alone by the international community.

Turkey could not remain indifferent to the tragedy of these people whom we see as our brothers and sisters regardless of their origin or creed and to whom we are connected with deep historical ties.

Since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria in the Spring of 2011, we have exerted every kind of humanitarian and political effort to solve the problem and we will continue to do so.

We are now hosting more than 3 million Syrians and over 200,000 Iraqis in our country.

We have launched together with Russia and Iran the Astana meetings with the participation of all conflicting parties in order to establish a permanent ceasefire and peace in the country.

Following our initiatives, the Geneva Process, which was blocked for a long time, has been revived.

We are putting into practice a new plan to ensure the security of the Idlib region within the framework of the agreement reached in Astana.

Turkey would be supportive of every step towards the construction of a stable and prosperous Syria, based on the territorial integrity of the country and respect for the democratic demands of its people.

Dear Friends,

We have taken and will continue to take all kinds of measures for those who came to our country with the outbreak of the Syrian crisis and to stem the influx of refugees into Europe.

We meet all the needs of these people from shelter to food and clothing, from health care to education at standards that are appreciated by everyone visiting our country.

However, I would like to underscore that we have not received sufficient support from the international community, especially the European Union, for the efforts we have been carrying out.

The expenditures of our public institutions, civil society organizations and our people in order to meet the needs of those living in the camps and cities in Turkey have exceeded 30 billion US Dollars.

In turn, the European Union has sent only 820 million Euros out of the 3 billion Euros + 3 billion Euros that it promised.

Total assistance from the international community through the United Nations remains around 520 million Dollars.

I should point out that no share of the assistance intended for the Syrians goes into our own budget; they are all delivered to those in need by the relief agencies through the relevant institutions of the United Nations.

Before the whole world, I hereby call on the countries and the international organizations, which have put all the burden of the 3.2 million people on Turkey's shoulders, to fulfill the promises they have made.

In fact, Turkey is a country that carries out humanitarian aid and development assistance activities around the world.

Not only do we welcome those who come to our country...

Through Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), the Disaster and Management Authority and the Turkish Red Crescent and various civil society organizations we rush to the help of all those who are suffering and under oppression, regardless of which part of the world they may be.

For example, through its official institutions and civil society organizations, Turkey has spent 1 billion US Dollars for the reconstruction of Somalia.

The work we carry out and the results we have achieved in Somalia would indeed set an example for similar efforts.

According to confirmed OECD statistics, with 6 billion Dollars of humanitarian and development aid in 2016, Turkey ranked as the world's second largest donor and top contributor in terms of GNP.

That said, Turkey is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest economy of the world.

Having spent 0.8% of its national income to humanitarian assistance, Turkey is one of the six countries that could meet the UN target.

As it can be seen, Turkey is working hard towards "A SUSTAINABLE WORLD" which constitutes the main message of our General Assembly.

We will continue in the time ahead with the same considerations in mind.

Honorable Mr. President,  
Esteemed Delegates,

Turkey is engaged in an intensive fight against the bloody terrorist organizations of the region such as DAESH and PKK nourished by the instability in Syria and Iraq.

In addition, our fight against the FETO terrorist organization, which attempted to change the legitimate and democratic regime of Turkey by a bloody coup, is also ongoing.

We have recovered 243 residential areas and a land larger than 2 thousand square kilometers thanks to the Operation Euphrates Shield initiated in Syria following the attacks of DAESH on our borders.

We have neutralized almost 3 thousand DAESH militants during that operation.

Around 100 thousand Syrians returned to and resettled in the region that we cleaned up from the terrorists.

The Operation Euphrates Shield is the single greatest accomplishment against DAESH since its occupation of the region.

I must highlight the following fact in your presence:

Most of the groups and forces claiming to fight against DAESH in the region in fact have no such purpose.

These groups and forces use DAESH as pretext to realize their own agendas.

The efforts by PYD-YPG to change the demographic structure in regions it has captured, to seize the property of the people, to kill or exile the ones who stand against it form a crime against humanity.

If the fight against DAESH is not conducted on a legitimate basis, it would be unavoidable for the world to come under the threat of new DAESH like entities.

Similar approaches exist in Iraq, as well.

Iraq also needs the compromises to be reached on the basis of territorial integrity and the realization of the ideals to build a common future.

Steps such as demands for independence that can cause new crises and conflicts in the region must be avoided.

We hereby call on the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government to abort the initiative they have launched in that direction.

Ignoring the clear and determined stance of Turkey on this matter may lead to a process that shall deprive the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government even the opportunities they currently enjoy.

We all should work on building tranquility, peace, security and stability in the region instead of sparking new conflicts.

Esteemed Mr. President,  
Dear Delegates,

Besides Syria and Iraq, we are also closely following the regions such as Libya and Yemen where terrorist organizations are trying to establish influence.

International community's support to the legitimate government in Libya shall contribute significantly to the stability of the country.

It should be kept in mind that if the mistakes made in Syria and Iraq are repeated in Libya, that will expose the whole world, particularly Europe, to much greater threats.

Another issue that Turkey lays delicate emphasis on is the immediate resolution of the conflict which has erupted in the Gulf region.

Purpose, we believe that the sanctions negatively affecting the living conditions of the Qatari people should first of all be lifted.

We support the mediation efforts of H.H. the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah for the resolution of the crisis.

Our hope is that these efforts would yield positive result.

We also hope that Saudi Arabia whom we see as the elder brother of the Gulf region would show sincere will for the resolution of the issue.

Another important problem is the issue of Palestine which we consider to be the gaping wound of the world and, by extension the preservation of the historical status of Jerusalem and Al Haram Al Sharif.

The crisis in Al Haram Al Sharif in July has demonstrated the sensitivity of the issue.

The continuation of the peace process can only be possible on the condition that Israel immediately stops illegal settlement activities and takes steps towards a two-state solution.

In this context, I call on the international community to support our Palestinian brothers and sisters in Eastern Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in their struggle for an independent and geographically unified Palestinian State.

Despite the current absence of conflict, the Balkans is another potential crisis geography which still faces serious challenges.

For this reason, we attach great importance to the integration of the Balkan countries with the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Turkey will continue to do its part for peace, stability and welfare to prevail in this exceptional region of the world.

The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Georgia is the key for regional stability in Southern Caucasus.

Therefore, we need to work harder for the resolution of the conflicts of Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We should never forget that each crisis we ignore today has the potential to spark a regional and even global crisis tomorrow.

In this framework, I would also like to underline that we are against all sorts of nuclear weapons which have come to increasingly occupy the world agenda in recent days.

It's obvious that we could not overcome such problems unless we completely cleanse the world from the scourge of nuclear weapons.

We are saddened by the fact that the comprehensive negotiation process started in 2008 has ended due to the incomprehensible stance of the Greek Cypriot.

We will do our best to ensure that the natural resources discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean in recent years will serve the peace, stability and welfare of the region.

We are ready to consider proposals for a solution that respect the rights of the Turkish Cypriots.

Esteemed Mr. President,  
Dear Delegates,

While struggling with all these global and regional problems, our world was shocked once again by the sad news that we received from Myanmar a few weeks ago.

The Muslim community in the Rakhine region of Myanmar is being subjected to almost an ethnic cleansing, with provocative terrorist acts used as a pretext.

The villages of the Rohingya Muslims, who have already been living in extreme poverty and misery and deprived of their citizenship rights are burned down as hundreds of thousands of people are forced to migrate from the region and the country.

The camps in Bangladesh, to which the people migrating from the region are diverted, are not in a position to fulfill even the minimum humanitarian needs.

As it is the case in Syria, the international community has not given a good account of itself regarding the humanitarian plight which Rohingya Muslims have been exposed to.

If this tragedy in Myanmar is not stopped, the history of humanity will face the embarrassment of another dark stain.

What is most important is to ensure that the Rohingya people, who have taken refuge outside their country, especially in Bangladesh, maintain their lives in safety, peace and welfare on their own lands where they have lived for centuries.

Turkey is endeavouring for the solution of this crisis, as well.

Recently on the occasion of a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, we held a special session on that matter in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, with the participating countries.

We will hold the meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Contact Group on Rohingya at the premises of the United Nations this afternoon.

My wife, my son and our Ministers who visited the camps in Bangladesh on September 7<sup>th</sup>, immediately after the latest crisis, personally witnessed the humanitarian plight.

The Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency, which is the Turkish institution for official development aid, is the only organization that can carry out assistance activities in Myanmar.

Furthermore, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, the Red Crescent, Türkiye Diyanet Foundation and various civil society organizations continue their activities to deliver humanitarian aid to the Rakhine Muslims refugees suffering in Bangladesh and other countries.

If concerned countries provide the necessary means, we would like to continue our assistance activities in a more comprehensive way.

Esteemed Mr. President,  
Dear Delegates,

All these developments and the humanitarian tragedies confirm the relevance of our appeal for the restructuring of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, symbolized by our motto "the world is bigger than 5".

Gathered here under this roof as the representatives of the entire world, if we cannot display the will to prevent the murders by terrorist organizations and humanitarian crises and grievings, then everyone will search for ways to help themselves.



If this understanding prevails, our world will be dragged into a new storm of chaos and cruelty. If Western countries do not prevent tendencies such as xenophobia, racism and animosity against Islam...

If the countries in the crises-ridden regions do not demonstrate the decisive will to fight terrorist organizations and poverty...

If we do not cooperate with one another on all these fronts...

How can we reach our ideals of peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet?

We support the work conducted towards this end by the Honorable Secretary-General, with whom we cooperated closely during his tenure as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

It is not to the benefit of anyone to insist on the continuation of this distorted system which no longer has the capacity to take concrete steps towards the good of humanity under its current form.

We want the Security Council to have a democratic, transparent, fair and effective structure. We propose that the Security Council consist of 20 members with the same rights and competencies to serve for two years and half of which are replaced every year.

As such, all countries in the world will have a say in this important institution when it is their turn.

It is imperative that we transform the United Nations into a body that is capable of taking swift action, as the embodiment of humanity's common conscience.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to remind you that regardless of the color of our faces and eyes, our tears is the same.

I urge you take action immediately to stop the tears flowing in various parts of the world.

I hope that the work of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Assembly will contribute to our efforts to that end.

With these thoughts, I salute with amity and respect all countries and peoples represented under this roof, at this joint parliament of humanity.

I wish you health and well-being...