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Press Release

ICJ Advisory Opinion a Significant Contribution to Justice and Peace

The General Delegation of Palestine welcomes the historic ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 19 July that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory since 1967 is unlawful; that Israeli settlements and the regime associated with them are in violation of international law, as are Israel's acts of annexation, including of East Jerusalem; that Israel's policies and practices constitute racial segregation and apartheid; and that Israel's policies and practices have resulted in the prolonged deprivation and denial of the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The Court outlined legal consequences for the international community in this regard, noting that, "*all States are under an obligation not to recognize as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory [nor] to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence*".

In this context, we call on the Australian, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Pacific governments to acknowledge, respect, and implement the recommendations of the ICJ. In particular, all states that have not yet recognised the State of Palestine should do so immediately, without further delay. As clearly stated by the Court: "*It is for all States, while respecting the Charter of the United Nations and international law, to ensure that any impediment resulting from the illegal presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to the exercise of the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination is brought to an end.*"

This call for recognition is especially crucial given recent developments, including the Israeli government's recently revealed plans for the largest seizure of Palestinian land in over 30 years, repeated assertions by Prime Minister Netanyahu that "*no matter what, Israel will maintain full security control over all territory west of the Jordan River,*" and the 18 July resolution passed by an overwhelming majority of the Israeli Parliament which outright rejected any possibility for Palestinian statehood (and therefore a two-state solution), even as part of a negotiated peace settlement with Israel. It should be noted here that the ICJ ruling also confirmed that the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination cannot be subject to conditions on the part of the occupying Power. Recognition of Palestinian statehood should not be left pending the outcome of a so-called Peace Process or negotiations: states calling for a two-state solution to the conflict must understand that recognition of the State of Palestine is a *necessary prerequisite*.

It is increasingly clear that the international legal approach is the most sensible and effective framework for securing rights and protections for the Palestinian people, and should continue to be the terms of reference for the Palestinian cause. In this context, the General Delegation of Palestine calls on civil society in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific region, including advocacy groups, Palestinian and Arab communities, unions, and faith-based organisations to promote these significant findings by the ICJ in their networking, lobbying, and awareness-building efforts in support of the Palestinian people.

For more information, please contact the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific.