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نيويورك

**Statement of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Before the Security Council

**On
The Situation in the Middle East
And The Palestinian Question**

Delivered by

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Mr. President,

I am pleased to congratulate you, Mr. President , on South Africa's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I am confident that your leadership of the work of the Council will lead to success in its deliberations. I would also like to express our appreciation and respect for the outgoing non-permanent members, as well as to congratulate the friendly and brotherly new States Members of the Council, namely, Morocco, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Togo and Guatemala. By the same token, I would like to thank Mr. Fernandez-Taranco for presenting his briefing on The Situation in the Middle East.

I should like to express my country's support for the statements made on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States.

Mr. President,

This debate comes at a time of critical economic and political circumstances, the most salient features of which are the following:

First, Israel the occupying power, still practices in the occupied Palestinian Territory a policy that aims at increasing settlements, which reached a record level in 2011. Further expropriation of Palestinian land, particularly in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, has thwarted the aspirations of the Palestinian people for freedom and independence in accordance with relevant international resolutions.

Secondly, it appears that Israel is oblivious to the situation in the New Middle East. While it views the aspirations of the peoples of the region for freedom with disrespect and arrogance, it also thinks it can deny the Palestinian people their legitimate rights to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State on their national soil, within the borders of 4 June 1967 and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its' capital.

Thirdly, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has the honour of being the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, views with considerable concern the Israeli practices in Al-Quds Al Sharif that are designed to efface its Arab and Islamic identity and to undermine the rights of the Christians and Muslims in the Holy City. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls upon the International Community to shoulder its responsibilities vis-à-vis Israeli actions in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, including settlement activities, the confiscation of Palestinian land and homes, the eviction of Palestinians and endangering the Holy Shrine.

Fourthly, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls upon the international community to take a bold and decisive position by fully recognizing the Palestinian State, within the borders of 4 June 1967 and with Al-Quds Al Sharif as its' capital, by responding positively to the application transmitted to the Security Council for Palestine's membership in the United Nations. It should also call upon Israel to end the occupation, lift the blockade of Gaza, dismantle settlements and release Palestinian detainees. Any procrastination will

constitute an abandonment of the moral responsibility of the international community and the Security Council.

Mr. President,

My country presented a comprehensive Peace Initiative to the International Community to end all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including an end to Israeli Occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan and the remaining Lebanese territory and the establishment of the State of Palestine. That initiative has been endorsed by all Arab states.

It is a source of pain that Israel continues to disregard that initiative, thinking that it can be kept on the table forever. Israel's settlement policy uproots the two-state concept and therefore undermines the basis and principles around which the Arab Initiative revolves.

Mr. President,

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is deeply pained by the suffering of the brotherly Syrian people. We call on the Syrian authorities to cease repelling the legitimate aspirations of their citizens with violence and bullets. We hope that the Syrian Government will heed the voice of reason and wisdom and abide by the proposals of the Arab League to find a balanced political solution that achieves the aspirations of the Syrian people, preserves the unity and territorial integrity of Syria, halts the cycle of violence, and spares the country from foreign interference in its internal affairs.

My country decided to withdraw its observers from the Arab observer mission to Syria because we did not feel that the Syrian authorities were serious in responding to the Arab Initiative. We refuse to be taken as witnesses or supporters of the killing and persecution of the great Syrian people. It is high time for the international community to shoulder its responsibilities towards Syria. The Security Council should hasten to take the necessary decisions in support of the Arab Initiative, and to adopt the political, economic and security measures that are designed to implement all its aspects.

Mr. President,

My country views with concern Iran's threats to the Security of the Arabian Gulf and the safety of its' waterways. We call on Iran to refrain from any action that threatens the security of the region. In that regard, we hope that Iran will swiftly respond to the appeals of the international community with respect to its nuclear programme and the need to subject it to international supervision in order to ensure that it does not go beyond the legitimate, peaceful uses of energy. At the same time, we call for making the entire Middle East, without exception , an area free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction. The new Middle East needs more prosperity, not more nuclear weapons; more reconstruction, not more settlements; more freedoms, not more killings; more justice, and not more tyranny, persecution and despotism. Those are the hopes of the Middle East and the aspirations of its peoples. They are also the Council's responsibility and duty.

Thank You , Mr. President.