

**H.E. Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, head of State and
Chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council of Ghana
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On this solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I extend on behalf of the people and Government of Ghana, warm felicitations to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its remarkable efforts aimed at informing and sensitizing public opinion about the plight of the people of Palestine. The occasion calls for the collective renewal of international commitment and solidarity as well as support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights to self-determination and independence.

The Palestinian question, which remains at the core of the Middle East problem, is the result of the continued denial of freedom and justice to the Palestinian people, 43 years after the establishment of the State of Israel. This denial that has also been characterized by untold human suffering, particularly in the occupied territories, imposes a moral duty on the United Nations and the entire international community to work assiduously for a quick and durable settlement of the problem.

In this connection, Ghana welcomes the ongoing Middle East talks which have been started in Madrid, Spain, sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union, aimed at finding a common ground between the Arab countries and Israel, and at finding an end to the human tragedy in occupied Palestine. We wish to stress, with regard to this new international effort, the need to ensure equity and justice for the Palestinian people. The principles underlying various United Nations resolutions, especially resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) on the question of Palestine and the Middle East cannot be overlooked in this worthy endeavour.

It is a matter of deep regret, that at a time when the international community is struggling to replace confrontation and conflict in the Middle East with dialogue and negotiations, the Israeli authorities are continuing with the expansionist settlement policy in the occupied territories. Such settlements have constituted the excuse for the deportation of Palestinians from their homeland at a time when the Palestinian National Council is calling for détente through withdrawal from Palestinian lands. The land-for-peace policy should provide an adequate means for a more effective peaceful solution of the entire Middle East problem.

On this important occasion, Ghana reaffirms its unflinching commitment and support for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and wishes it every success in its endeavours. We also extend our sincere best wishes and solidarity with the Palestinian people in its just struggle for peace in its homeland.