

English Translation of Press Statement by Prime Minister during his visit to Palestine (February 10, 2018)

February 11, 2018

**Your Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas
Members of the Palestinian and Indian delegations,
Members of the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Sabah-al-kher (Good Morning)**

It is a matter of great happiness for an Indian Prime Minister to come to Ramallah for his first ever visit.

President Abbas, I would like to thank you for the words that you said in my honor and also for the very warm and grand welcome extended to me and my delegation.

Excellency, you have very cordially bestowed me with the highest honor of Palestine. This is a matter of great respect for the entire India and it is also a symbol of Palestine's friendship and goodwill for India.

The old and strong historical relations between India and Palestine have stood the test of time. Our incessant and steadfast support to the Palestinian cause has always been on top of our foreign policy.

Therefore I am happy to stand here in Ramallah with President Mahmoud Abbas who is a very old friend of India. I was privileged to welcome him during his New Delhi visit last May. I am happy to renew our friendship and India's support.

During this visit I got the opportunity to pay my tributes at the tomb of Abu Omar. He was among the top leaders of his time. His role in Palestinian struggle is unprecedented. Abu Omar was also a distinguished friend of India. Visiting the museum dedicated to him has also been an unforgettable experience for me. Once again I offer my heartfelt tributes to Abu Omar.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Remarkable courage and perseverance has been displayed by the people of Palestine in the face of constant challenges and crises. You have demonstrated rock like determination to deal with the circumstances and that too at a time when there was an atmosphere of instability and insecurity which hampers progress and which puts in jeopardy the benefits which have been acquired after significant struggle.

The difficulties and challenges against which you have moved ahead is really commendable. We appreciate your spirit and your faith in your efforts for a better tomorrow.

India is a very old ally in Palestine's nation-building efforts. We have cooperation in the areas of training, technology, infrastructure development, project assistance and budgetary support.

As a part of our new initiative, we have started a Technology Park project here in Ramallah which is currently under construction. After its creation, we hope that this institution will work as a center

which enhances employment skills and services.

India is also collaborating to set up an Institute of Diplomacy in Ramallah. We believe that this institute will emerge as a world-class training institute for the young diplomats of Palestine.

Our capacity building cooperation involves mutual training for long and short-term courses. Training and scholarship slots for Palestine in leading Indian educational institutions of different sectors such as finance, management, rural development and information technology were recently extended.

I am happy that during this visit we are extending our development cooperation. India will continue to invest in Palestine in the projects of health, educational infrastructure and women empowerment center and also in a printing press.

We consider this contribution as building blocks for the creation of an energetic Palestine State.

At the bilateral level, we have agreed to make our relations deeper through the Ministerial level Joint Commission Meeting.

Last year, for the first time, there was an exchange between the youth delegations of India and Palestine. Investing in our youth and cooperating in their skill development and relationships is a shared priority.

India is also a young country like Palestine. Our aspirations for the Palestinian youth are the same which we have for Indian youths and which offers opportunities for progress, prosperity and self-reliance. They are our future and inheritors of our friendship.

I am happy to announce that we will increase the exchange of young persons from 50 to 100 from this year.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

In our discussion today, I once again assured President Abbas that India is committed to take care of the interests of the Palestinian people.

India hopes that Palestine soon becomes a sovereign and independent country in a peaceful atmosphere.

President Abbas and I had discussions on recent regional and global developments related to the peace and security of Palestine and its peace process.

India greatly hopes for peace and stability in this region.

We believe that permanent solution to the issue of Palestine is ultimately contained in negotiations and understanding through which a path to a peaceful coexistence can be obtained.

Intense diplomacy and judiciousness alone can help to achieve freedom from this cycle of violence and from the burden of the history.

We know it is not easy. But we must constantly keep on trying because there is so much at stake.

Your Excellency, I express my heartfelt gratitude for your wonderful hospitality.

I, on behalf of 1.25 billion Indians, also extend warm greetings for the progress and prosperity of the people of Palestine.

**Thank you.
Shukaran Zajeelan!**

**** This is not an exact translation of the Prime Minister's Press Statement at Palestine. The statement is uploaded for facilitation of English media.**