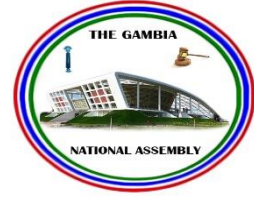




REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

National Assembly, New Assembly Building, Reginald Pye Lane
Banjul, The Gambia



STATEMENT

BY

HON. SEEDY SK NJIE

DEPUTY SPEAKER & HEAD OF DELEGATION

AT THE

148TH ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)

IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

23RD – 27TH MARCH, 2024

*THEME: PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR
PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING*

Mr. President,

The theme for this session is timely and pertinent. In a world troubled with strife, division, and uncertainty, parliamentary diplomacy emerges as a beacon of hope for fostering peace, dialogue, and mutual understanding. Now, more than ever, we are summoned to transcend our differences, bridge divides, and chart a course towards a more harmonious and interconnected global community.

At the heart of parliamentary diplomacy lies the recognition that dialogue, cooperation, and meaningful engagement is an indispensable tool for resolving conflicts, promoting reconciliation, and advancing the shared interests of humanity. As parliamentarians, we bear a solemn responsibility to uphold the fundamental principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, tirelessly working towards the collective well-being of our citizens and the broader international community. Today, we are reminded of the pivotal role that parliamentary diplomacy and democracy plays in addressing the pressing challenges confronting our world. Chronic conflicts in Africa, spanning nations like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia, and the Central African Republic, continue to inflict profound suffering upon communities, disrupt livelihoods, and

exacerbate humanitarian crisis. Moreover, the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine serves as a stark reminder of the fragility of peace in Europe and its far-reaching implications for individuals and Nations far and near the conflict zone.

The impact of these conflicts extends far beyond the immediate victims, affecting the lives of people worldwide. As conflicts persist, the global cost of living escalates, rendering necessities increasingly unaffordable for millions. Food insecurity, human displacement, and economic instability are just a few of the dire consequences faced by individuals and communities tangled in the crossfire of conflict.

Mr. President, the enduring Israeli–Palestinian conflict underscores the urgent need for concerted efforts towards peace and reconciliation. The Government and people of The Gambia, under the leadership of His Excellency, Adama Barrow, stands in solidarity with the international community in condemning all forms of violence and aggression, particularly the recent Israeli military operations in Gaza. These operations have resulted in the loss of innocent lives, widespread destruction to properties, and profound humanitarian suffering. We echo the calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza

and across Palestine to prevent further bloodshed and alleviate the dire humanitarian situation facing the Palestinian people.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are entrenched in decades of forceful occupation, displacement, and denial of basic fundamental rights to the Palestinian people. The Government of The Gambia reaffirms its commitment to upholding international law, human rights, and UN General Assembly resolutions as the foundation for any meaningful and lasting resolution to this enduring conflict. My delegation and I called on the UN Security Council to act positively and passed a unified resolution to condemn Israel and end the war.

In this vein, we emphasise the importance of accountability and justice for all parties responsible for violations of international law and human rights. The Government of The Gambia calls for thorough and impartial investigations into alleged atrocities committed during the recent military operations in Gaza, with a view to holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring justice for the victims.

Furthermore, we reiterate our unwavering support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to establish an

independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem, referred in Arabic as Al-Quds Al-Shareef, as its capital, based on the pre-1967 borders. We urge the international community to redouble its efforts to facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive peace process that addresses the root causes of the conflict, with a view of ensuring a just and durable solution.

As world largest gathering of parliamentarians, we bear a profound responsibility to advocate for dialogue, reconciliation, and respect for fundamental human rights of people and Nation across the globe. The recent submission of The Gambia to the International Court of Justice serves as a powerful testament to our commitment, as a Nation, to upholding international law and promoting peace and justice. In that submission, The Gambia emphasised to the ICJ that Israel's occupation of Palestine is illegal and must be ended immediately. This underscores the importance of addressing ongoing conflicts through international legal channels and collective action. Through parliamentary diplomacy and constructive engagement, as manifested in the very core principles of the IPU, we can build bridges that foster understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among nations.

Mr. President, my distinguished colleagues,

You may all agree that since the formation of the IPU in 1889, parliamentary diplomacy has proven to be a powerful tool for resolving conflicts and promoting dialogue. For example, in 1994 and 1998, the Parliament of South Africa and the Assembly of Northern Ireland respectively, played a critical role in helping to resolve their country's longstanding democratic conflicts leading to a democratic and multiracial South Africa, and the Belfast Agreement (Good Friday Agreement) in Northern Ireland.

In conclusion, let us reaffirm our unflinching commitment to the principles of peace, justice, and equality for all peoples and Nations. Together, let us endeavour towards a future where the aspirations of the Palestinian people for freedom, dignity, and self-determination are realised, and where all parties are held accountable for their actions under international law.

I thank you all.