

# President Abū Māzen: I recognize Israel, two Peoples in two States

Naples | 28 April 2013

Dear President Capasso,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am truly happy to be here at the headquarters of the *Fondazione Mediterraneo*, such an important institution, which has been actively promoting Peace and Dialogue for more than twenty years.

I am honoured to receive this prestigious Award and hope to fulfill the expectations that it places on me: when I see the name of those who have received the award, including personalities such as Mahmud Darwish and Naguib Mahfouz, I realize what an honour it is to be considered alongside them.

The mission of Peace at the *Fondazione Mediterraneo* and that of its President Michele Capasso deserves our full recognition and appreciation: because the world is tired of wars, and our task here is to stop this process, and bring those "senseless wars", which fill our world with bloodshed, to an end.

We want and must also bring this campaign to militarize the world to an end, especially through nuclear arms.

We continue to ask – as the *Fondazione Mediterraneo* has been vociferously doing so for the past 20 years – for all problems to be solved through dialogue, dialogue, dialogue!

Those of you, who, like myself, have lived through the Second World War, know only too well that wars only bring about destruction and tragedy. We can see this around us today, not only in the Middle East, and these realities cause us great heartache. This is why we have to be resolutely committed to Peace, especially in



Palestine. We know that the path is long and tortuous, but we cannot simply resign ourselves to this situation. Resignation means failure and we cannot and must not accept this.

Accordingly, we have invited our Israeli friends to participate in dialogue, dialogue, dialogue, to bring about peace, a real peace based on international legitimacy; we do not ask for anything but the international legitimation of the State of Palestine, nothing but what was decided by international agreements and compliance with the commitments undertaken therein.

Some people believe that the peace process has gone on for so long and there is no longer any hope of finding a solution. We cannot accept this culture and these words as this is not what our Peoples desire: in Palestine, we make enormous efforts every day to disseminate the culture of peace among our citizens.

Nobody wants war or a Third Intifada: we

reject this categorically! If Israel does not was peace now, we can wait: tomorrow or the day after or even longer.

Peace is not a whim: it is an imperative for all of us and for our future.

We cannot allow another war to happen, nor the use of violence. Thanks to the support of people like Michele Capasso, we have succeeded in obtaining the status of "Observer Country" at the United Nations: many countries have supported us throughout the world, first among them was Italy and then France, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Many more countries did not object and remained impartial and they should be applauded for this.

Given that we have been granted "Observer Country", we must now do even more to build peace.

There is an Arab initiative for peace between Israel and Palestine that we have been

supporting for 10 years, which is simple but innovative: "Israel withdraws from Palestinian territories and in exchange, all Arab countries recognize Israel".

This means that from Mauritania to Indonesia everyone is ready to recognize Israel and open to human relations in exchange for peace with Israel! This is why we say to our Israeli neighbours: instead of living in an isolated manner, in an armoured oasis, open up to an "ocean of dialogue and exchange" from Mauritania to Indonesia. This is how we can build peace not only between Israel and Palestine, but in all countries. We hold out our arms in the hope of peace: we do not want to withdraw them and I am here today to relaunch the peace and not war. I greet you all, especially those who have

written the pages of history right here in this building, the headquarters of the *Fondazione Mediterraneo*. It is precisely here that I would like to lay down the foundation stones of peace so that tragedies such as the Second World War can be avoided as they caused the deaths of more than 40 million innocent victims.

Ours has to be the message of peace in order that our Peoples, Israel and Palestine, may live in safety and serenity.

I would like to offer President Michele Capasso a gift: it is the Virgin Mary with "Our Baby Jesus". As you know, Jesus was Palestinian, he was born in Palestine: we love and respect him as the "Great Harbinger of Peace".

This top quality work of art is handcrafted and was made in Bethlehem, I invite you all to Palestine to Ramallah where the "Totem for Peace" by the sculptor Mario Molinari will be raised.

Let Peace be with You!