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## Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

### Summary record of the 26th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 November 2018, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Kemayah, Sr. .... (Liberia)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Agenda item 55: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/73/357; A/73/364; A/73/410; A/73/420 and A/73/499)**

1. **Mr. Rodrigo** (Sri Lanka), speaking as Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and introducing the report of the Special Committee (A/73/499), said that, as in previous years, the Israeli Government had not responded to the Committee's request to access the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As a result, the Committee had visited Amman in July 2018 to meet with the Palestinian authorities, United Nations officials and Israeli, Palestinian and Syrian civil society representatives, victims and witnesses of Israeli violations.

2. The Special Committee had heard that Israeli settlement expansion and development continued in both the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Settlements were prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention and had a profound impact on the daily life of Palestinians and Syrians and the enjoyment of their basic human rights, including freedom of movement and access to their livelihoods, education and health care. Between July 2017 and July 2018, Israeli security forces had demolished 213 structures owned by Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, leading to the displacement of 579 people, including 290 children. Demolitions were largely carried out on the pretext of a lack of building permits, but they were also carried out for punitive reasons. Property provided as humanitarian assistance had also been demolished, including two classrooms built with donor funding in the Bedouin refugee community of Abu Nuwar, located on the outskirts of Jerusalem in Area C. As the occupying Power, Israel was obligated to provide for the humanitarian needs of the protected population, to agree to relief schemes on their behalf and to facilitate those relief schemes by all the means at its disposal.

3. The Special Committee had also been updated on the situation of Khan-al-Ahmar, a Bedouin community in the Jerusalem periphery. Demolition of the community's homes and other structures would amount to forced eviction and would increase the risk of forcible transfer of the inhabitants. Forcible transfer in the context of an occupation, undertaken without the free, prior and informed consent of the individuals affected,

was prohibited as a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

4. In Gaza, the Special Committee was especially concerned about the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces in the context of demonstrations along the fence between Gaza and Israel. As at 31 October 2018, 228 Palestinians had been killed and over 24,362 had been injured. One Israeli soldier had also been killed by gunfire near the fence. The demonstrations had been mostly peaceful, although incidents in which Palestinians in Gaza had burned tires, thrown stones and Molotov cocktails and flown burning kites over the fence into Israel had occurred. While the Special Committee viewed violent acts by demonstrators as unacceptable, it strongly condemned the excessive use of force by the Israeli security forces. In cases reviewed by the Special Committee, the threat posed by demonstrators did not seem to justify the use of lethal force by Israeli security forces. The Special Committee recalled that, in the context of policing demonstrations, the Israeli security forces must respect international human rights instruments pertaining to law enforcement, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, according to which firearms could be used against persons only if there was an imminent threat of death or serious injury.

5. The prevalence of a culture of impunity was an issue of grave concern, especially in cases pertaining to excessive use of force by Israeli security forces. Confidence in the Israeli military justice system was undermined by the fact that investigations, when they took place, rarely resulted in prosecutions, and sentences frequently did not match the gravity of the violations committed by the Israeli security forces. The Special Committee welcomed the decision of the Human Rights Council in May 2018 to create an independent commission of inquiry to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of international law in the context of the military assaults on the demonstrations that had begun in March 2018 as an important means of seeking effective justice and redress for victims.

6. The blockade and closure of Gaza, now entering its twelfth year, remained the most significant obstacle to sustainable recovery and economic development. The restrictions on freedom of movement of people and goods to and from Gaza had a significant negative impact on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including the rights to an adequate standard of living, health, education, work and family life. The Israeli authorities had significantly tightened restrictions on imports to Gaza and had banned the exit of all goods for several days in July and August 2018. With the ongoing electricity crisis, the restrictions on

imports, including of emergency fuel to Gaza, severely threatened the maintenance of life-saving services. The nearly 2 million Palestinian residents of Gaza faced daily power cuts and had limited access to water and sanitation services. More than 70 per cent of the population relied on humanitarian assistance, the bulk of which was food assistance. The situation was compounded by the unprecedented funding crisis facing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which had been forced to scale down some of its emergency programmes for the second half of 2018 in order to be able to continue food security support for nearly 1 million refugees.

7. Of serious concern to the Special Committee was the lack of access for Palestinians in Gaza to adequate health care because of shortages of medicines and supplies, as well as hospitals and health centres being forced to reduce essential services owing to electricity cuts. Additionally, patients seeking permits to leave Gaza for treatment faced delays and denials of their permit requests. Denial of medical treatment was a violation of the obligations of Israel under international human rights and humanitarian law.

8. The Special Committee had been briefed extensively on the situation of Palestinian detainees in Israeli custody, who numbered some 5,820 individuals as at July 2018. It had serious concerns about the continued use of arbitrary administrative detention and the medical neglect of Palestinian detainees. It deeply regretted reports that arrests of children were on the rise and that children continued to suffer from ill-treatment during arrest and detention. As at July 2018, there were 270 children in detention, nearly half of whom had been transferred from the Occupied Palestinian Territory to prisons in Israel, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Human rights defenders, journalists and civil society organizations working on issues related to the occupation continued to face harassment and intimidation by the Israeli authorities, including recurrent arrest and interrogation for social media postings and peaceful demonstrations.

9. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israeli settlements were expanding, in violation of international law; restrictions were imposed on the development of the only five remaining Syrian villages; and Syrians faced unequal access to land and water. Additionally, organizations had expressed concern that local elections scheduled for October 2018 in four Syrian villages of the occupied Syrian Golan for the first time since the beginning of the occupation in 1967 were a manifestation of the desire of Israel to impose its sovereignty. The Special Committee recalled Security

Council resolution [497 \(1981\)](#), in which the Council determined that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect, and that the Fourth Geneva Convention continued to apply in the occupied Syrian Golan.

10. Israeli discriminatory practices against the Palestinians and Syrians were increasing, resulting in a rapid deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation across the occupied territories. In that context, there was an urgent need to revive the peace process towards a two-State solution. The Special Committee called upon the Government of Israel to end its occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, in compliance with Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [497 \(1981\)](#); to cease all settlement activity in the West Bank and the occupied Syrian Golan; to lift the land and sea blockade and closure imposed on Gaza; and to take all necessary precautions to ensure that Israeli security forces acted in accordance with the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. It also called on the international community to use its influence to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of the occupied territories, all settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and the blockade and closure of Gaza.

11. **Mr. Motta** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General under the current agenda item, said that the report on the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories ([A/73/364](#)) summarized the responses received from the Permanent Missions of Egypt, Ireland and the Syrian Arab Republic to a request for information about steps taken to implement General Assembly resolution [72/85](#).

12. The report of the Secretary-General on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan ([A/73/410](#)) covered the period from 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2018 and was based on monitoring and other information-gathering activities carried out by OHCHR, as well as information from other United Nations entities, Israeli and Palestinian non-governmental organizations and media sources. The report provided an update on settlement-related activities in the territories occupied by Israeli since 1967, as well as in-depth consideration of settlement expansion and the coercive environment in the Jordan Valley in the West Bank. For

the first time since 2016, the report noted a rise in incidents of settler violence as well as an increase in legislative activity in the Israeli Knesset to extend the application of Israeli domestic law over the Occupied Palestinian Territory, creating an environment which could compel Palestinians to leave their areas of residence. Individual or mass forcible transfer constituted a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and a war crime that could lead to individual criminal responsibility. Israeli authorities should cease all activities that contributed to a coercive environment or that could lead to forcible transfer; cease any initiative to relocate communities in Area C; and halt and reverse all settlement development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including occupied East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan.

13. The report of the Secretary-General on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem ([A/73/420](#)) covered the same period as the report on Israeli settlements ([A/73/410](#)) and was based on the same monitoring and information-gathering activities. It focused on the situation in Gaza and raised concerns regarding the impact of the ongoing blockade and closure on the human rights of Palestinians, notably restrictions on freedom of movement inside and outside Gaza, as well as the response by Israeli forces to the Great March of Return demonstrations along the Gaza fence over the previous eight months. The report highlighted several key ongoing human rights violations committed by Israel, including those related to restrictions on the freedom of movement affecting to right to health of patients not granted permits to leave Gaza for medical treatment and the right to life and security of some 95 Palestinian demonstrators killed by the use of lethal force by Israeli forces acting in a law enforcement capacity when the threat did not amount to a threat to life or of serious injury to the Israeli forces or anyone else. The report noted that serious challenges remained to ensuring accountability for alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The closure over Gaza should be lifted and people and goods allowed to move freely, and Israel should ensure that any use of force was in compliance with international law, including during law enforcement operations.

14. The report of the Secretary-General on the occupied Syrian Golan ([A/73/357](#)) summarized the responses received to a request for information about any steps taken or envisaged concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/88](#). Responses had been received from the Permanent Missions of Egypt,

Ireland, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic and from the International Labour Organization.

15. **Mr. Bachman** (Israel) said that his Government did not acknowledge the mandate of the Special Committee, the intention of which was to serve a one-sided narrative of the conflict while undermining the Israeli right of self-defence. It was sad that Israel was subject to investigation by the Committee even though it had the best record in the Middle East for respecting human rights, much better than that of Hamas in Gaza or the records of neighbouring countries, which did not even have the justification of self-defence. In responding to the threat of more than 400 rocket and mortar attacks by Hamas targeting Israeli civilians in the previous 24 hours alone, which had even killed one Palestinian native to Hebron, Israel was doing its utmost to act with restraint, focus on the terrorists and minimize collateral damage. There was in fact no Israeli occupation of Gaza; instead, there was a Hamas occupation of Gaza, and if Gazans wanted a better life, they must confront that organization. Instead of focusing on Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East and a country of great achievements, the Special Committee should focus on the region's true problems: terror, rejection of a Jewish presence and intolerance among Muslims themselves.

16. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine), recognizing the work of the Special Committee even when faced with continued non-cooperation by Israel and its obstruction of the Special Committee's work in violation of its legal obligations as a State Member of the United Nations, said that the reason for the Special Committee's existence was that Israel was an occupying Power imposing the longest occupation in contemporary history. Among the deplorable human rights violations committed by Israel under the occupation, she highlighted violations against children as the most troubling, including the targeting of children with excessive lethal force and the arrest, detention and abuse of Palestinian children, some as young as ten years old. Her delegation requested further information on United Nations engagement with Israel as an occupying Power and in the context of its obligations under international humanitarian law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in order to deter such gross violations.

17. **Mr. Motta** (OHCHR) said that OHCHR worked to promote adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law as it applied in Palestine and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the obligations of Israel under international law. OHCHR had offices in the West Bank and Gaza that worked with the Palestinian authorities and non-governmental

organizations to promote awareness of human rights law and humanitarian law and engage in advocacy where necessary and appropriate with the Israeli authorities, including the Israeli Defence Forces and members of the Government. The High Commissioner also engaged in advocacy at the highest bilateral levels with the Permanent Representative of the State of Israel in Geneva. In the near future, the High Commissioner might visit Israel and the State of Palestine, at which time he would raise international human rights and humanitarian law obligations of both parties in relation to the situation of the Palestinian people.

18. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that her delegation welcomed the Special Committee's report and its calls for the cessation of all settlement activities, home demolitions, forced displacements and other measures of collective punishment; the lifting of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, the investigation of all cases of excessive use of force; and, above all, an end to the Israeli occupation that had begun in 1967, in compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions. Her delegation urged immediate, collective action based on those recommendations towards addressing the root causes of the human rights violations endured by the Palestinian people, with a view to bringing a halt to those violations, ensuring respect for Palestinian rights and securing a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the prolonged, grave injustice. Absent serious measures of accountability, Israel would continue to act with impunity as a State above the law, trampling the rights of the Palestinian people and destroying all chances for peace, with grave repercussions for the future of Palestinians, Israelis and peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

19. Amidst another cycle of violence, her delegation reiterated the Palestinian leadership's full condemnation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, targeting innocent civilians and causing civilian casualties. International humanitarian law must be respected in all circumstances without exception, including in Occupied Palestine, including in the Gaza Strip. Her delegation expressed its appreciation to the Government of Egypt for its efforts to bring a halt to the recent volatility.

20. The only reason for the continuation of the Special Committee's mandate was relentless breaches by Israel of international humanitarian and human rights law and its absolute refusal to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions. The Government of Israel persisted with its unlawful, destructive, inhumane and racist policies and practices, oppressing the Palestinian people, violating all of their

fundamental human rights, foremost their right to self-determination, and entrenching its colonial occupation of the Palestinian Territory.

21. Despite the Security Council's explicit demands in resolution 2334 (2016) and prior resolutions for the immediate and complete cessation of all settlement activities, Israel had systematically continued them in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, in brazen contempt of the Council. The reports confirmed that in 2018 the occupying Power had engaged in non-stop colonization of Palestinian Territory and continued constructing settlement units, confiscating Palestinian land and properties, transferring thousands of Israeli settlers, expanding its medieval wall, performing excavations and other unlawful measures undermining the sanctity and historic status quo of holy sites, demolishing Palestinian homes and other civilian structures, revoking Palestinian residency permits, forcibly displacing Palestinian civilians, with Bedouin communities at increased risk of forced transfer, and massively exploiting Palestinian natural resources. In addition to blatantly disrespecting the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, those measures constituted grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention and war crimes under the Rome Statute. Such illegal policies and practices were at the core of the human rights violations being suffered by the Palestinian people and had further fragmented Palestinian Territory and undermined its contiguity, jeopardizing the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders. Recent actions by the United States of America, including the provocative declaration on Jerusalem and the transfer of its embassy in contravention of Security Council resolutions 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), had exacerbated the situation, emboldening Israeli perpetrators, including the extremist settler population.

22. The ferocity of Israeli aggression against unarmed civilians peacefully protesting in the Great March of Return in Gaza was yet further reflection of the occupying Power's absolute disregard for Palestinian life as it attacked, killed, injured and maimed some 230 civilians, including children, without hesitation and detained, imprisoned and tortured some 7,000 Palestinians without remorse. Under Israeli occupation, the Palestinian people faced a protection crisis that was dramatic and constant. Her delegation urged further serious consideration of the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report in follow-up to General Assembly resolution ES-10/20 to ensure the protection, safety and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population. Her delegation also respectfully reminded States of their repeated commitments to protect civilians



in situations of armed conflict, including specific commitments to protect women and children.

23. Such illegal policies and practices had been accompanied by a vast web of collective punishment measures affecting every single aspect of life, in further grave breach of the occupying Power's obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and other instruments of international law. The most outrageous form of collective punishment was the illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, currently in its eleventh year, whereby 2 million Palestinians had been virtually imprisoned in a dire humanitarian crisis, protection crisis and socioeconomic suffocation and subjected to repeated lethal Israeli military aggression.

24. As attested in numerous reports, Gaza had been brought to the brink of collapse and was forecasted to be uninhabitable by humans by 2020. Without freedom of movement, the rights to livelihood, housing, health care and water, poverty and need had intensified, with over 80 per cent aid dependency, 53 per cent unemployment and 70 per cent unemployment among youth, deepening their despair and exposing them to greater risk of radicalization. At the same time, as shown by the popular mobilizations of the Great March of Return and the protests against the wall, settlements and forced transfer across the West Bank, the overwhelming majority continued to choose peaceful, non-violent means to draw attention to their plight and call for their rights.

25. In the legislative arena, Israel continued to reinforce its illegal, expansionist agenda through racist legislation contradicting the most basic tenets of international law, as with the Jewish nation-State law, which further institutionalized discrimination against the Palestinian Arab population in Israel and was clearly aimed at negating Palestinian rights. It was time for the international community, and particularly those who claimed to "share democratic values" with Israel, to respond to the new reality. A State that systematically violated its legal violations and behaved as an Apartheid State should be treated as one.

26. It was time to reject the cynical discourse peddled by Israel that it was being unfairly singled out. The Special Committee's deliberations were not about so-called "Israel bashing" and were not biased; instead, they addressed Palestinian realities under international law and sought justice through legitimate, peaceful, diplomatic, legal means. The problem was that Israel had never accepted the application of international law and had never negotiated in good faith during 25 years of the peace process. In contrast, the Palestinian leadership had repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to

international law and United Nations resolutions, as well as its readiness to accept an historic compromise for the State of Palestine to live side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. However, the Government of Israel had continued to choose occupation over peace, and so it was time to act collectively to end the injustice.

27. The State of Palestine appealed to the international community to uphold its legal obligations and responsibilities towards the question of Palestine until it was fully resolved in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including a just solution for Palestine refugees. There must be an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands, and the Palestinian people must realize its inalienable human rights and live in freedom and dignity in its independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. That solution was the cornerstone of the peace and coexistence sought in the Middle East, in order for all peoples to live and thrive in stability and security.

28. **Mr. Suárez Moreno** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement condemned the Israeli Government's obstinate settlement of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and was deeply concerned that Israel had prevented the Special Committee from holding consultations with the relevant Israeli authorities and from gaining access to the occupied territories in line with its mandate. Though the Special Committee had been aware of the illegal Israeli activities for decades, the Government persisted with total impunity, and its continued violations of the fundamental human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and other Arabs living under occupation were a matter of serious concern. Such illegal colonization measures and other systematic violations had severely exacerbated the conditions on the ground, causing immense human suffering, increasing instability and heightening tensions.

29. The increase in the illegal colonization practices and war crimes of Israel demonstrated that country's total disregard for the global calls for it to comply with international law. The time was now to end the abominable Israeli occupation. The findings in the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/72/35) were deeply concerning, particularly the military incursions and raids and the excessive use of force against young Palestinians and peaceful protesters in the Gaza Strip and in many other parts of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The terrible humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip was deeply concerning and constituted a serious violation of international law,

requiring immediate attention. The civilian population in Gaza must be provided with relief in order to counter the reversal of development in the region. The Movement called for the promotion of expeditious economic reconstruction and recovery in the region and for firm support of UNRWA and its mandate.

30. The Movement urged Israel to end its illegal blockade of Gaza without delay or conditions, in accordance with international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions. Violence and incitement by Israeli settlers continued to cause Palestinian casualties, contributing to their expulsion from their land. Illegal settlement activities undermined the contiguity of the Palestine territory and the viability of the State of Palestine; put the two-State solution at risk; and violated the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

31. Israel had used several purportedly legal and administrative measures to expand its control over more Palestinian territory, including the declaration of "State land" and seizure of Palestinian land for archaeological and recreational activities. Furthermore, the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of Palestine denied the right of Palestinians to sovereignty over their natural resources, including water and energy resources, and their right to development. The international community, particularly the Security Council, must take urgent action to compel the occupying Power to immediately comply with all its obligations under international law, in order to avert further human suffering and salvage the prospects for peace. The lack of accountability for the violations committed by Israel fostered impunity and destabilized the situation on the ground.

32. With reference to the Syrian Golan, the Movement reaffirmed that all unlawful actions perpetrated by Israel, as well as recent attempts by that country to claim sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan, constituted clear violations of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Israel must abide by that resolution and withdraw completely to the borders of 4 June 1967. At its recent Summit, the Movement had emphasized, *inter alia*, the urgency of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a two-State solution within the pre-1967 borders. All parties concerned must make a concerted effort to that end. The Movement reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the immediate restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination in an independent and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to a just solution for the

Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

33. **Mr. Kazi** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, said that the Special Committee's report (A/73/499) reflected the deeply concerning human rights violations perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy sites. Member States should support the mandate of the Special Committee in order to raise awareness of the unjust and illegal situation and mobilize international action, in accordance with the relevant resolutions, to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and achieve justice and peace. Adequate accountability measures were needed and further binding resolutions should be adopted to hold Israel responsible for its violations and crimes.

34. In many cases, Israeli policies amounted to war crimes, causing immense human suffering, exacerbating conditions on the ground and undermining peace and stability in and around the region. Particularly concerning were the Israeli aggressions against the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif and Coptic priests in Jerusalem. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the historical Hashemite custodianship of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Respecting the sanctity of the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem and explicitly condemning any violations in that regard was crucial.

35. Israel was waging a systematic campaign to deny the history, rights and legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people and had instituted countless discriminatory policies against them. The absence of accountability measures, allowing Israel to act with total impunity, had exacerbated the human suffering and the volatility of the situation, further hindering the achievement of a just and lasting solution. Urgent political intervention was therefore needed to ensure compliance with international law, including the relevant United Nations resolutions. Serious and practical measures must be taken to end the Israeli occupation and enable the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and establish a sovereign Palestinian State, as the foundation for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

36. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), speaking on behalf of the League of Arab States, said that the League condemned the deadly Israeli escalation and welcomed the Egyptian Government's efforts to negotiate a ceasefire. Aided by international silence, the Israeli authorities continued to violate international resolutions and the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people, using disproportionate, indiscriminate force and detaining thousands of Palestinians, including women

and children. Alarming, Israel persisted in building and expanding settlements, demolishing homes, confiscating land and Judaizing occupied Jerusalem, in flagrant violation of international law, imperilling the viability of the peace process. It was not surprising that Israel had rejected the Arab Peace Initiative and other recognized terms of reference of the peace process.

37. In accordance with every international covenant adopted since the Oslo Accords and numerous United Nations resolutions, the question of Jerusalem was one of the final status issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As such, any Israeli attempts to annex the city to or declare it the capital of Israel, dispossess Palestinian residents of Jerusalem or build settlements on their land were null and void. The Arab States therefore repudiated all illegal Israeli acts aimed at annexing the holy city, erasing its Arab character and isolating it from neighbouring Palestinian communities. Jerusalem was an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory occupied in 1967 and was the capital of the State of Palestine. All allegations to the contrary were in contravention of international law and internationally recognized resolutions.

38. The United Nations and the international community should take prompt and decisive action to compel Israel to comply with the terms of reference of the peace process, halt the construction of settlements, lift its blockade on the Gaza Strip and refrain from violating the rights of the Palestinian people. In that connection, the Arab States denounced Israeli attempts to bring the Syrian Arab Golan under Israeli sovereignty, confiscate its agricultural land and plunder its natural resources, and called for an immediate halt to measures to impose de facto Israeli rule on its people.

39. The Arab Peace Initiative had demonstrated the readiness of Arabs and Muslims to make peace in accordance with internationally recognized resolutions. Continued Israeli violation of those resolutions would spark tensions in the region, undermine trust in the peace process and diminish opportunities to reach a comprehensive, lasting and just resolution on the basis of a two-State solution. Fifty years on, the Israeli occupation endured, and Israel had rejected every opportunity it had been given to achieve peace. Against that backdrop, the League urged the United Nations and the international community to show solidarity with the Palestinian people in its quest to have its inalienable rights upheld.

40. **Mr. Chatzisavas** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and the stabilization and association

process country Bosnia and Herzegovina, said that the European Union was deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza, including the lack of access to basic services, water and electricity. It condemned the intensified violence that had led to over 200 deaths and 21,000 injuries of Palestinians in recent months and had worsened the volatile situation in and around the Gaza Strip, as well as the firing of rockets, incendiary kites and balloons on Israeli civilian areas, which had caused severe damage. All actors concerned must do their utmost to prevent further escalation and loss of life. While Israel could exercise the right to self-defence, it must also respect the principles of necessity and proportionality in the use of force, and independent and transparent investigations must be conducted in that regard. Reports of violent attacks against Israel under the guise of protests should also be investigated.

41. The parties should cooperate with the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, in his efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and improve economic conditions. Reducing tensions and avoiding another conflict in Gaza must be the immediate priority. The return of the Palestinian Authority to the Gaza Strip was indispensable to the sustainable improvement of the situation. In addition, the international community must mobilize additional funding. However, fundamental changes to the situation in Gaza were required in order to achieve lasting results, including the full reopening of crossing points, while taking into account the legitimate concerns of Israel. The European Union supported efforts by the United Nations and Egypt towards the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under one single and legitimate Palestinian Authority, in collaboration with the Israelis and Palestinians and other regional actors and partners.

42. One of the major achievements of the Oslo Accords was the preservation of Palestinian institutions; maintaining their stability was in the interests of both the Palestinians and the Israelis. The European Union urged both parties to refrain from unilateral actions that undermined the relaunch of negotiations or the viability of the two-State solution. The pending demolition of the village of Khan al-Ahmar, including its school, was deeply concerning, as was the decision by the Israeli authorities to advance settlement expansion plans in Hebron. Not only were settlements illegal under international law, they also constituted an obstacle to peace and threatened the viability of the two-State solution. Cooperation was needed to reverse such negative developments on the ground. A two-State solution, based on the 1967 borders, that fulfilled the security needs of both parties and Palestine aspirations



for sovereignty, ended the occupation and resolved all final status issues, was the only viable path to a just and lasting peace.

43. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan) said that the Special Committee's report had once again exposed the heart-wrenching plight of the Palestinian people under the illegal and oppressive occupation that violated their fundamental human rights and undermined their hopes of a life of dignity and freedom. The act of survival was a daily struggle for the Palestinian people. Arbitrary arrests and detentions were rife; restrictions on imports, including emergency fuel, threatened health services and access to clean water; and the death toll had continued to rise since the beginning of the peaceful protests in March 2018.

44. The expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, in violation of Security Council resolutions, had most recently affected the Bedouin community of Khan Al-Ahmar. Such actions constituted a calculated process that aimed to disperse and disintegrate an entire people. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Oslo Accords, the fundamental tenets of the two-State solution were being systematically dismantled in full view of the international community, impeding the vision of peace and mutual coexistence.

45. The financial constraints faced by UNRWA were liable to thwart the long-term sustainability of many of its critical activities, including education and health and social services. Nonetheless, in the wake of the unprecedented resource shortfall, the additional contributions of traditional and new donors were heartening and reinforced the Agency's role as a beacon of hope for Palestinian refugee communities. The challenge for UNRWA was not inefficient use of resources, it was insufficient available resources; adequate, predictable and sustainable financing to the Agency was therefore imperative. As an expression of its continued solidarity, Pakistan had made an additional contribution that year.

46. Countless Security Council and General Assembly resolutions had demanded an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine. However, the scales of justice had so far failed to tip in favour of the Palestinian people. Lack of progress on the question of Palestine constituted a betrayal of generations of Palestinians and had fuelled hostility and discord in the region. To reverse the rise of violence and extremism, a just settlement of the Palestinian issue must be reached.

47. **Mr. Nasir** (Maldives) said that the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine and Arab lands had brought seven decades of discrimination, torture and death to the people of Palestine. The apartheid policies, the blockade

and the denial of basic human rights needed to be reversed as a starting point for the achievement of the two-State solution. The Maldives condemned the continued human rights violations committed by Israel and its disregard for international law in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. Peace should always be achieved through peaceful means, not violence. The closure of Gaza and restrictions on the supply of electricity and water perpetuated poverty, limiting access to medical care, education and economic opportunities and leaving three quarters of the population of Gaza reliant on humanitarian assistance.

48. The international community must ensure implementation of its decisions and resolutions, taking action to overcome any obstacles through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. An environment of respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people was urgently needed, including the elimination of incitements, provocations, fear and oppression. The Maldives reiterated its call for a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, and its unwavering support for the quest of Palestine to achieve worldwide political recognition and obtain full membership of the United Nations.

49. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the question of the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and the repercussions of that occupation on regional security and stability had reached a critical stage, as the international community remained derelict in its duty to compel Israel to end its occupation and its other manifold violations of international law. It was high time for the Organization to take serious action to end the brutal, decades-long Israeli occupation.

50. The Israeli occupying forces had rearrested the Syrian activist Sidqi al-Maqt, who had been released recently after spending 27 years in Israeli prisons, sentencing him to a further 14 years in prison, purely for having released video footage exposing Israeli cooperation with terrorist organizations in the area of separation. The United Nations must take immediate action to release all prisoners languishing in Israeli custody.

51. Israel had been trying to alter the legal and political status of the occupied Syrian Golan by attempting, unsuccessfully, to impose Israeli citizenship on its Syrian inhabitants, who had spectacularly thwarted the so-called local elections Israel had attempted to hold in the Syrian Golan in October 2018. By discriminating against, curtailing the freedom of

movement of, arbitrarily arresting and conducting show trials of Syrian citizens, who were treated like war criminals, Israel violated many of their rights, including the right to resist occupation and the right to communicate and meet with relatives in their home country of Syria. The Israeli blockade of Arab villages in the occupied Syrian Golan amounted to collective isolation, and the occupying Power forbade infirm inhabitants of the Syrian Golan unable to afford medical care from traveling to Damascus to receive care free of charge. The Israeli authorities also prevented Syrians living in the Golan from building on their own land and had destroyed homes built by their forefathers, citing the failure to obtain a building permit as a pretext.

52. Students in the Syrian Golan had been forced to follow Israeli educational curriculums, and many Syrian teachers, accused of participating in anti-occupation activities, had been fired and replaced with Israeli teachers. In addition, the Israeli authorities had plundered several archaeological sites in the Syrian Golan.

53. The economic life of the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan was also profoundly affected, with Israeli occupying forces having confiscated over 75 per cent of the territory and repurposed agricultural land for military use and for the construction of more than 40 settlements inhabited by 23,000 Israeli settlers. Hazardous waste disposal sites had caused an unprecedented rise in cancer cases in the Syrian Golan. In addition to prospecting for hidden oil and gas reserves and asserting control over groundwater resources, the Israeli authorities diverted water resources to Israeli settlements, depriving the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan of their right to their own water. Furthermore, Syrian farmers were prevented from selling their crops in their home country of Syria.

54. Such acts of aggression by Israel as its open support of armed terrorist groups active in the area of separation of forces and its attacks on sites in Syria had exacerbated regional tensions to unprecedented levels, hence the need for the Organization to uphold its responsibility to compel Israel to withdraw from all occupied Arab lands, desist from its barbarous policies and release prisoners in its custody, in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

55. **Mr. Rivero Rosario** (Cuba) said that his delegation was deeply concerned at the continued suffering of the Palestinian people following more than 51 years of foreign occupation by Israel, in violation of international and humanitarian law. Cuba rejected the unilateral declaration by the President of the United States of America announcing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which constituted a serious and flagrant

violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. It also violated the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people and of the Arab and Islamic nations. The reports before the Fourth Committee documented how Israel continued to implement its unlawful colonizing policies, including the confiscation of Palestinian land and property, expansion of settlements, including in East Jerusalem, and forced displacement of Palestinians.

56. After 51 years of occupation, Israel still had not complied with the relevant Security Council resolutions on the occupied Syrian Golan. Any measure taken by Israel to alter the legal status or demographic composition of the occupied Syrian Golan, or to exercise its jurisdiction and administration in that territory, was null and void and without legal effect. All such actions, including the illegal construction and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Syrian Golan since 1967, constituted violations of international law, United Nations resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. Israel must withdraw fully and unconditionally from the Syrian Golan and all occupied Arab territories, and constructive and respectful dialogue must be maintained among all parties.

57. It was still regrettable that the Security Council had not succeeded in reaching an agreement to bring an end to the aggressive, colonialist policies and practices of Israel. Moreover, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, which had inflicted an economic and humanitarian crisis on more than 2 million Palestinians for over a decade, must be lifted immediately.

58. His delegation welcomed recent efforts to reinstate peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis and to foster intra-Palestinian unity. Cuba also reaffirmed its support for the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations and called on the Security Council to officially declare its support for such a development. If the Council failed to do so, the General Assembly must act decisively. His Government would continue to support a broad, just and lasting settlement based on a two-State solution leading to Palestinian self-determination with a free, independent and sovereign State within 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and with the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

59. **Ms. Al-Harami** (Qatar) said that the reports before the Committee highlighted the ways in which the Palestinian people and the populations of other occupied Arab territories were being subjected to human rights violations including excessive use of force, administrative detention, the detention of children, the obstruction of human rights activists and the unlawful

exploitation of Palestinian natural resources. Settlement construction and expansion had continued unabated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Palestinians faced settler violence, restrictions on building permits, forced transfer, land confiscations and restricted access to public services. The blockade on the Gaza Strip had now been in place for a decade, with tragic consequences. That situation required renewed, urgent efforts to reach a lasting, comprehensive and just solution enabling the Palestinian and Israeli sides to live side by side in peace and security. The process would require serious negotiations based on the agreed terms of reference, the resolutions of the United Nations, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map. Its purpose should be to establish a viable State of Palestine within the borders of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital; end the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and the occupied Lebanese territories; secure an immediate and comprehensive end to settlement activities; ensure the return of refugees; and enable the Palestinian people to enjoy its inalienable rights. Israel must respect its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which applied to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

60. Her delegation once again repudiated the illegal Israeli practices in the occupied Syrian Golan, which contravened the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 497 (1981), and those of the General Assembly, the most recent of which was resolution 72/88. The decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Golan was null and void and without international legal effect.

61. **Mr. Kim In Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the occupation of Arab territories by Israel had long threatened peace and security in the Middle East and was deeply concerning. The reckless behaviour of Israel had manifested itself in its withdrawal from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the enactment of a draconian law stipulating that the entire Quds region was Israeli territory; the declaration of Quds as its capital city; and the violence against Palestinians who had protested against the opening of the United States embassy in Jerusalem, which had culminated in crimes against humanity.

62. The adoption of General Assembly resolutions 10/19 (2017) and 10/20 (2018) reflected the international community's support for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with East Al-Quds as its capital, based on the 1967 borders. However, one permanent member of the Security Council had employed all possible tactics to block the adoption of

those resolutions, including by blackmailing other countries with threats of ending economic assistance. As such, Israel was supported by a country that misused the United Nations as its political tool and hypocritically championed sanctions and the safeguarding of peace. The Special Committee should recommend a thorough investigation by the Security Council of illegal acts including the occupation of territories by Israel and the imposition of sanctions through the relevant international legal instruments. His Government continued to support the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State and the right of the Syrian people to safeguard the political and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

63. **Mr. Nordin** (Brunei Darussalam) said that his delegation was concerned at the worsening human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and strongly condemned all human rights violations committed against the Palestinian civilian population. The occupying Power must end its illegal practices, which constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

64. The escalation of violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, as well as in Gaza, where a humanitarian crisis was taking place as a result of the oppressive blockade, was seriously concerning. The violence and loss of lives over the past year had further complicated efforts to make genuine progress in the peace process. Dialogue and negotiations were key in achieving dispute settlement. A political solution to the conflict must be found and the only viable course of action was the achievement of a two-State solution. Any actions that undermined that objective must be prevented. In that regard, any change in the position on Jerusalem from the status quo was a matter of serious concern. The final status of that city must be resolved through negotiations among all parties directly involved.

65. Addressing the illegal occupation of Palestine should be part of the international community's efforts to achieve sustainable development and promote global peace and security. His Government reaffirmed its support for the work of the United Nations and other international bodies to address the Palestinian issue and promote international peace and stability. Member States must ensure that the question of Palestine remained at the forefront of the United Nations agenda.

66. **Mr. Elghodban** (Libya) said that the brutal reality of the war raging in the Gaza Strip rendered discussion of periodic reports a political luxury. In a bid to mislead international public opinion, the oppressive occupying

Power would surely allege that its security was threatened by Palestinian Arab territories, drawing attention to the reaction of an oppressed people instead of to the actions that had elicited that reaction. He wondered whether the occupying Power had expected praises and thanks from a people whose children had been starved, whose land had been ravaged by a diabolical settlement policy and whose Christian and Islamic sacred sites had been violated before its eyes on a daily basis, or whether it instead sought international help in eradicating that people to pave the way for the Zionist dream to be realized.

67. In all likelihood, no one knew for sure what the borders of the promised land of Israel were, or how far Zionist territorial ambitions ultimately extended. Instead of concealing the beliefs about the so-called promised land contained in its holy books, the occupying Power should openly declare to the Gentile nations what land it believed had been promised to it. The adoption of the Jewish Nation-State Law, which denied the ties of Palestinian Arabs of all faiths to their historic homeland, signalled the transformation of the conflict from a political one pitting a people kicked out of its land against an occupier laying claim to that land, to a religious conflict all the more dangerous at a time when the region was convulsed with terrorist conflicts fuelled by religion. The occupying Power's alignment with terrorist aims, through its support of such legislation, was consistent with its provision of assistance to terrorist groups in Syria under what it had termed Operation Good Neighbour. By helping to mire the region in conflict fuelled by a religious extremism that recognized neither nation States nor borders, the occupying Power – supported by major Powers – would thus clear the way for the dream of the land of Israel to become reality, biding its time to declare its borders and seize the land it desired by force. He wondered whether the occupied Syrian Golan would be considered part of the promised land of Israel and how the wider Arab region as a whole figured into the major Powers' geopolitical schemes.

68. While the ongoing hostilities between the Palestinian people and the occupying Power could not be denied, they must be understood in the context of the latter's obstinate rejection of countless initiatives to end the Arab-Israeli conflict, and of the brutal occupation itself. The international community's sugar-coated promises had placated the Palestinian people, all the while allowing the occupation to become an entrenched and unavoidable reality. The Palestinian people was being criminalized for its resistance to the abhorrent Israeli occupation and its demand to establish an independent State, a right that it of all peoples, with its

glorious cultural legacy, deserved to have upheld. Resistance to occupation remained the only available option for the Palestinian people, now that the world had abandoned it.

69. Most strangely of all, the occupying Power was using its own citizens as pawns, introducing individual armed settlers into the conflict to entrench the occupation and impose new facts on the ground; their provocation of Palestinian landowners, aimed at inciting clashes that would later be misrepresented as unprovoked attacks by Palestinian Arabs against peace-loving Jews, exacerbated the situation and all but guaranteed a deadly outcome.

70. It was time for the international community to heed its conscience and take serious action to end the violence of the occupation, by freezing the United Nations membership of Israel if necessary, and providing Palestinian civilians with international protection. There was a collective responsibility to deter an occupation that, left to its own devices, would stop at nothing in its bid to take possession of all Palestinian land and even the remaining Arab lands, a bid informed by the principle of a land of Israel without borders.

71. With regard to the occupied Syrian Golan, the unity and territorial integrity of Syrian Arab land must be safeguarded. Moreover, the occupying Power must not believe that the Syrian conflict would make the Arab peoples accept its occupation of the Syrian Golan, no matter how many illegal attempts it made to strip Syrian inhabitants of the Golan of their identity and belonging to their homeland of Syria.

72. Despite being in the grip of its own security crisis, Libya would not hesitate to denounce the occupying Power, for as embattled as it and other Arab countries might be internally, Palestine would remain the open, bleeding wound in the conscience of every Arab. Indeed, the proliferation of extremism ravaging the Arab world was ultimately a reaction to the brutal occupation.

73. **Mr. Najaf** (Iraq) said that all Member States and international organizations should take practical steps to implement the General Assembly resolution on protection of the Palestinian civilian population (A/RES/ES-10/20) and to establish an effective mechanism to that end. States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention had a duty to comply with their relevant obligations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by halting Israeli violations of international law and international humanitarian law; putting an end to those violations and to the Israeli occupation was equally incumbent upon the international community as a whole.

74. Continued Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people demonstrated that Israel was oblivious to international terms of reference, including the relevant United Nations resolutions. His Government rejected the occupying Power's racist laws and practices aimed at creating new facts on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The adoption by the Israeli Knesset of a law transferring the powers related to the Occupied Palestinian Territory from the Israeli Supreme Court to the Court of Administrative Matters and of the Jewish Nation-State Law was illustrative of the extent to which fundamental Palestinian rights and the very existence of Palestinians were threatened, in violation of international law.

75. In that connection, his delegation condemned all arbitrary practices targeting defenceless civilians and systematic arrest campaigns against Palestinians. The occupying Power must be compelled to provide all legal protections to detained inhabitants of the Occupied Territory, including the guarantee of a just trial. Furthermore, measures aimed at altering the demographic composition of Jerusalem must be stopped.

76. As the entity responsible for maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council must implement all resolutions related to protecting the Palestinian people until a final settlement of the conflict was reached. In closing, he reiterated the firm position of Iraq in support of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to establish a State of Palestine on Palestinian land, with East Jerusalem as its capital and within 1967 borders, and the need to halt immediately the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.

77. **Mr. Saleh Azzam** (Lebanon) said that his Government condemned the refusal by Israel to cooperate with the Special Committee by allowing it to visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory, directly preventing that body from fulfilling its mandate. Fifty years of reports on the impact of Israeli practices on the rights of Palestinians and other Arab inhabitants of territories occupied by Israel had revealed a steady deterioration that, in turn, could no longer be attributed to mere violations, reflecting instead a deliberate policy pursued by Israel without legal or moral deterrent.

78. Citing security as a pretext, Israel flouted the most basic human rights of Palestinians and other Arabs, in flagrant violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. That year's report of the Special Committee had revealed a discernible escalation in discriminatory practices targeting Palestinians and other Arabs, both in legislation and in practice. Settlement activity in the West Bank continued apace,

with work on some 10,000 new residential units under way since 2017 despite the fact that settlement activity was prohibited under international law. Violence perpetrated by settlers against Palestinians had increased by 50 per cent in the first four months of 2018.

79. Israel continued to demolish buildings erected by Palestinians on Palestinian land, citing the failure to obtain the necessary building permit – permits that Israel refused to grant Palestinians to begin with. The Special Committee had documented the occupying Power's practice of using demolition as a punitive measure against persons linked to Israeli political or security targets, effectively a form of collective punishment, which was prohibited under international humanitarian law.

80. With regard to the occupied Gaza Strip, Lebanon strenuously condemned the systematic, disproportionate force used by Israeli security forces against peaceful demonstrators who had participated in the March of Return, killing 130 Palestinians and injuring over 18,000 others in less than five months. Tragically, journalists and medical personnel had been among those targeted by Israeli forces.

81. Israel was actively working to alter the demographic composition of the occupied Syrian Golan, expanding settlements and granting citizenship to thousands of new Israeli settlers, who had equalled Syrian inhabitants of the territory in number. In addition, the Israeli authorities continued to discriminate against Syrians and plunder the natural resources of the occupied Golan.

82. In the face of such bitter realities, the international community must disrupt its own inertia and move from documenting violations to effectively preventing them by implementing the applicable provisions of international law. The recommendations contained in successive Special Committee reports served as a legal road map for protecting Palestinians and other Arabs from Israeli violations of human rights in territories occupied by Israel. The international community must redouble its efforts to implement those recommendations, with a view to ending the suffering of innocents and realizing the inalienable rights of those living under occupation.

83. **Mr. Mahfouz** (Egypt) said that after 50 years of the occupation of Arab lands, of continued suffering and of endless discussion, many were weary of reiterating positions that had lost their meaning because of all the repetition and of their ultimate failure to affect the situation on the ground. The peoples living under occupation and subjected to human rights violations for decades must be even more tired, their rights far from being realized, their hopes of a life with dignity passed on from generation to generation.



84. The purpose of United Nations meetings on the question of Palestine was not to attack or dispute the legitimacy of a particular party, but instead to establish that the right of Israel to an independent State and that of the Israeli people to live in security within its borders – rights endorsed by the Organization in its vote to establish the State of Israel in 1948 – were inextricably linked to the establishment of the State of Palestine and comparable rights for the Palestinian people. In the light of the regrettable failure, 70 years on, to establish a State of Palestine as stipulated in part II of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), Member States must continue to meet to safeguard the inalienable legal rights of the Palestinian people, given the Organization's role as guarantor of those rights, which would not be undermined or otherwise endangered by settlement, home demolitions or other illegal measures on the ground. It must retain that role until all parties realized that neither the Palestinian nor the Israeli people could live in peace and security without securing the other's rights to land and to peace, as their destinies were intertwined.

85. The General Assembly's annual renewal of its commitment to resolve the conflict and establish the State of Palestine constituted the Palestinian people's last hope. The principle of land for peace remained the governing paradigm, and the 1967 borders remained a fundamental parameter. It would behove both parties to return to negotiations on the basis of the two-State solution, as the options of a single State, rejected by both peoples, or of perpetual conflict fuelled by populism and one-upmanship were not viable. He was confident that the Egyptian experience in making peace with Israel could be replicated; until both parties were ready to move forward with negotiations, the international community must endeavour to preserve the international legal framework that governed relations among nations.

86. **Mr. Bachman** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that during the session there had been an overwhelming number of accusations against Israel and an orchestrated demonization of his country. The impression of Israel as an empire of evil was a result of the Palestinians and the Arab Muslim world hijacking not only the Committee, but the United Nations as a whole, along with other international organizations.

87. Anti-Semitism and hatred of the Jews was at its strongest in Arab countries. While those who had spoken earlier had attempted to defame Israel, his country was the only democracy in the Middle East where freedoms were respected. Israel had made significant innovative and intellectual contributions to the world, yet it was also believed to have tortured the

Palestinians for 70 years. In truth, there was an inherent hatred towards Jews and Israel in Arab countries. Furthermore, there had also been a rise in anti-Semitism in Europe due to the spread of hatred and political Islam by migrants.

88. Israel had taken control as a result of the efforts of Palestinians and other Arabs to wipe the State of Israel off the face of the earth. Jews had been slaughtered by Arabs during the British Mandate long before the independence of the State of Israel, prior to any idea of establishing the Jewish State. While Jews worldwide had celebrated the establishment of the Jewish State, the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) was the reason it had not been accepted, and the war had consequently been launched against the Jews by the Palestinians and Arabs. The obstacle to peace was the failure by the Palestinians to share with the Jewish State. If the Palestinians brought a coherent, authentic intention to compromise, officially accepting the Jewish State, there would be peace in the Arab world. Conversely, if Israel were to put down its weapons today, it would cease to exist.

89. There was a significant rift among Palestinians; it was even impossible for their own officials to visit Gaza. Today, there was no possibility of one peaceful Palestinian voice. Instead, terrorists and their families were being remunerated according to the number of Jews that they killed, fostering an industry of terror. Meanwhile, only Israeli human rights practices were being discussed, mainly by Muslim and Arab countries, mutating reality into a United Nations-fabricated model of Israel. Dialogue on the notion of the so-called Palestinian occupied territories was necessary; as there was no Palestinian State, such territories could not be occupied by Israel. His Government wished for a positive solution for Palestinians and for all ideas of liquidating the State of Israel to be relinquished. However, the Palestinians refused to pursue such a solution, aggressively contradicting its achievement in Gaza and denying the notion of a Jewish State.

90. The blockade of Gaza was a protective measure that was not designed to embitter the lives of Palestinians, but rather to restrict the capacity of Hamas to fight against Israel. His Government wanted to help resolve the tragedy, but the Palestinian people must first show a willingness to reach a solution and accept the Jewish presence. Israel extended its sincere goodwill to the Palestinians for the achievement of a peaceful coexistence.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*