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## Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

### Summary record of the 27th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 November 2018, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. O'Toole (Vice-Chair) ..... (Ireland)

### Contents

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 (*continued*)

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*In the absence of Mr. Kemayah, Sr. (Liberia), Mr. O'Toole (Ireland), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.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** (*continued*) ([A/73/357](#), [A/73/364](#), [A/73/410](#), [A/73/420](#), [A/73/499](#))

1. **Mr. Shaddad** (Jordan) said that his delegation looked forward to the day when the current item could be removed from the agenda, brought about by the end of the Israeli occupation and the creation of an independent Palestinian State in accordance with international legitimacy, including the Arab Peace Initiative. The international community must intervene without delay and compel Israel to demonstrate restraint and take practical steps to end the suffering of the people in Gaza. His delegation welcomed the efforts of Egypt and the United Nations to de-escalate tensions and impose a ceasefire. The conditions in Gaza must be addressed within a comprehensive political framework that guaranteed the return of Israel and Palestine to the negotiating table to reach a two-State solution and bring about peace and security in the region. However, the peace process had repeatedly been frozen by the expansion of Israeli settlements. Failure to address the situation sent a dangerous signal, undermined the hope of establishing peace, further emboldened terrorists and extremists and gave way to more hatred and violence. Member States must work together to lay the foundations for a comprehensive, definitive and peaceful resolution to the conflict.

2. His Government was proud of the historic Hashemite Kingdom's guardianship of holy sites in Al-Quds and would continue to stand against any attempt by Israel to change the historic identity of the region and any division of the Haram al-Sharif/Al-Aqsa Mosque. In recent years, Israel had placed further restrictions on the transport and movement of people and goods, which impacted daily life in the area, divided families, deprived Palestinians of economic and educational opportunities and exacerbated poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, thousands of hectares of land had been confiscated for settlement expansion in the West Bank. Under the illegal occupation, homes continued to be destroyed and Palestinians uprooted and forcibly displaced to make room for more housing units and military bases. Under discriminatory and selective legislation, Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and in Area C of the West Bank could not receive construction permits, forcing them to flee their homes or build

without permits and risk having their homes destroyed. Violations of the right to education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories continued; students had been detained, killed and injured, and restrictions had been imposed on educational institutions.

3. The Palestinian cause remained a fundamental priority for his Government, which would continue to work concertedly with Palestinians, other Arab countries and the international community to relaunch serious negotiations for the creation of an independent Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Coexistence based on mutual respect must be re-established with every generation. Communities and societies could be protected only through serious work that went beyond security and humanitarian measures and focused on the principles of justice, equality and social and economic inclusivity.

4. **Mr. Zaayman** (South Africa) said that his delegation fully supported the Special Committee in its important work and remained committed to a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Regrettably, the possibility of achieving lasting peace seemed distant in the current climate of heightened hostilities and systematic human rights violations that fuelled hatred and violence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Having undergone a monumental political transition to a democracy based on respect for the fundamental human rights of all peoples, South Africa remained hopeful that a similar, positive outcome could be had. However, the international community must remain realistic in its assessment and analysis of the situation.

5. His Government condemned the actions taken by Israel Defense Forces against unarmed Palestinian protesters expressing their discontent over the decision of the United States of America to move its embassy to Jerusalem. It also echoed calls for an independent inquiry into those killings to hold those responsible accountable. However, it was clear from the Special Committee's report that those brutal actions were merely one example of a widespread, ongoing, systematic and deliberate campaign of repression against Palestinians. The deplorable human rights violations also took the form of collective violations, dividing people with a monolithic physical barrier, imposing draconian restrictions on movement and humiliating them at checkpoints. Furthermore, the continued expansion of Israeli settlements into the Occupied Palestinian Territories increasingly encroached on the limited land available to the Palestinian people.

6. His Government was deeply concerned at the lack of progress and signs of regression in the peace process. The impasse, which had significant implications for regional and global peace and security, was fuelled in part by the increasing polarization of viewpoints, an erosion of multilateralism and provocative unilateral actions. Member States must rally against those developments and redouble efforts to bring about peace through constructive dialogue, mediation and compromise. An unwavering adherence to and respect for human rights must be upheld by all parties as an essential precondition for peace.

7. **Mr. Keçeli** (Turkey) said that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were under serious threat. They endured hardship and humiliation as a result of a systematic effort to pressure them into accepting the status quo, which included violations of their fundamental rights to life, liberty and security; excessive use of force by Israeli security forces; illegal settlement projects in the heart of the West Bank; the displacement of Bedouins from Khan al-Ahmar and the destruction of their settlements; and the Jewish nation-state law. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was the most recent target of those efforts. The current situation bred desperation among the Palestinians, deepened the sense of injustice in the region and created a growing mistrust towards universal values. It was high time for the international community to take decisive steps to protect the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

8. **Mr. Alduwaisan** (Kuwait) said that Israel, the occupying Power, blocked the Special Committee's work and violated Security Council resolutions, international law and civil and political human rights instruments. During the "Great March of Return", the Israeli war machine had committed a number of heinous violations on the border with Gaza, killing over 60 defenceless and unarmed Palestinians and injuring over 2,400. He wondered how long Israel would be allowed to destroy the lives of Palestinians with impunity and how far those violations would go. The Security Council should condemn those actions and call for an independent and transparent investigation in order to hold those responsible accountable. It was no exaggeration to say that Israel was defying international will. It had recently withdrawn its candidacy for the Security Council, recognizing the international community's condemnation of its actions.

9. His delegation was deeply concerned at the unilateral measures taken by Israel, particularly its continued settlement expansion. Such measures constituted flagrant violations of international law and

numerous Security Council resolutions, notably resolution 2334 (2016). It reiterated its call to revitalize current international mechanisms, including the Quartet, whose membership should be expanded to include other regional parties. His Government supported all peaceful measures taken by Palestine at the national and international levels to strengthen its sovereignty over Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian territories. Furthermore, measures should be taken to provide international protection to defenceless Palestinian civilians. In that regard, the Security Council had reaffirmed the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) to the Occupied Palestinian Territory in resolutions 605 (1987) and 904 (1994).

10. The desired peace should begin by putting an end to the Israeli occupation according to international resolutions, the land-for-peace principle and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Palestinian people should be granted their right to self-determination to establish their own independent State on the basis of the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The international community should move from a strictly humanitarian focus to a political and human rights focus to address the question of Palestine. His delegation called on Israel to lift the blockade of the Gaza Strip, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). Furthermore, international donors must fulfil their pledges, provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people and support reconstruction and economic recovery. The Palestinian people looked to the United Nations to carry out its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. His delegation renewed its support for the Palestinians' efforts to defend their legitimate rights, including their historical rights in Jerusalem, which were guaranteed by international resolutions, and called on all Member States to recognize the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

11. **Mr. Umar** (Nigeria) said that the spike in the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, would negatively impact the Middle East peace process, as they affected the contiguity and viability of a future sovereign Palestinian State. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had noted that demolitions, forced evictions and the threat of violence from Israeli settlers in Occupied Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan infringed on the Palestinians' rights to life, liberty and security. His delegation therefore welcomed the recommendations made in the Secretary-General's report on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian

Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/73/410) and called on Israel to cease all settlement expansions, which were changing the character, status and demographic composition of the affected territories. Freezing the settlements was essential to establishing peace between Israel and Palestine and enabling them to coexist as viable independent States based on pre-1967 borders, with their respective capitals in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

12. The alarming humanitarian situation in Palestine, particularly the near collapse of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli blockade and military action, should be of grave concern to the international community. His delegation called on Israel to end the blockade and restore the movement of people and goods. It also called on Israel, Palestine and other Arab States in the region to work together to achieve the shared objective of a two-State solution based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and international law.

13. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that the Special Committee's report once again drew attention to the ongoing human rights violations being committed with impunity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan. Further attesting to those violations, mainstream media reported on the use of excessive force against protesters, which the Israeli Government had ordered, despite the offer by Egypt to intervene as a peace broker for a return to normalcy.

14. His delegation was deeply concerned that the occupying Power had once again refused to cooperate with the Special Committee, which had not been allowed access to the occupied territories. Israel continued to expand settlements; destroy and confiscate property; exploit natural resources in the territories; impose the blockade and closure of Gaza; detain children; and use administrative detention against the Palestinian civilian population, including in the occupied Syrian Golan. Such measures were illegal under international law and the Geneva Conventions, contravened Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and undermined the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Moreover, since the beginning of the "Great March of Return" in March 2018, a significant number of civilian protesters, including women and children, had been killed or wounded as a result of the disproportionate use of force by the Israel Defense Forces, which was a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and was tantamount to a war crime and a crime against humanity. Furthermore, the Israeli land and sea blockade imposed on Gaza, entering its twelfth year, had devastated economic development. Such

actions would further diminish the possibility of achieving peace and stability in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the wider Middle East region. They would likely increase the prospects for violence and hatred while placing additional pressure on UNRWA and other human rights organizations. The volatile environment in which Palestinians continued to labour was unsustainable, and the international community could not allow it to continue any longer. His delegation therefore called on all warring parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid further endangering the lives of civilians, especially women, children and the most vulnerable.

15. His Government remained committed to the cause of the Palestinian people and their struggle to exercise their inalienable right to establish an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel should resume negotiations with a view to reaching a two-State solution, which was the only viable route to peace. The Palestinians' hopes for justice, equality and peace and their longing to be free from fear and exercise their right to self-determination should be at the forefront as the international community sought to assist in resolving that conflict. His delegation welcomed the ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt between the Israeli Government and the people of Gaza the previous day. Lastly, the election of Palestine as Chair of the Group of 77 and China was a victory for justice and freedom over oppression and sent a clear message of solidarity. His delegation was committed to providing the requisite support to Palestine for the successful execution of its mandate.

16. **Mr. Habib** (Indonesia), commending the Special Committee for its work, said that his delegation recognized the challenge of preparing reports without the cooperation of Israel, particularly being denied entry to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As it had done year after year, and in violation of international law and various United Nations resolutions, Israel continued to recklessly demolish Palestinian structures, restrict movement, carry out arbitrary detentions, construct new settlements, impose the blockade on Gaza, use excessive force, violate human rights, obstruct humanitarian assistance and build the separation wall around the city of Jerusalem. Life in Gaza had been rendered almost meaningless, as the Palestinian population continued to be deprived of basic services. The occupying Power's obnoxious policies demonstrated a lack of interest in pursuing peace and a grim determination to alter the demography, characteristics and territory of Palestine.

17. His delegation condemned the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and supported new

measures to protect the Palestinian people, including the deployment of an international protection force. The policies and unilateral efforts of Israel to alter the character or prejudice the final status of Jerusalem made the road to peace far longer, more difficult and more insecure. All parties must comply with international humanitarian and human rights law. His Government called on Israel to change its attitude; ensure full respect for its obligations under international humanitarian law, including Security Council resolution 2234 (2016); comply fully with the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; and lift the blockade of Gaza. The international community should focus on finding a political solution to the conflict on the basis of the two-State vision without delay and enhance support for the work of the Special Committee and other relevant United Nations mechanisms.

18. **Mr. Ghorbanpour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his Government was gravely concerned at the horrible findings presented in the Special Committee's report concerning the Israeli regime's treatment of innocent Palestinians. As at the end of August 2018, 130 Palestinians, including 23 children, had been killed, and over 18,700 had been injured. After more than seven decades, the Israeli regime's brutal policies and practices continued to violate the fundamental human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and other Arabs living under its occupation. They were deprived of their land and property; forcibly evicted; denied access to essential services; and subjected to violence, trespassing, harassment and intimidation by Israeli settlers. The illegal and inhumane land and sea blockade of Gaza, which continued to negatively affect the lives of the entire Palestinian civilian population in the district, must be lifted, and all crossings must be opened. Furthermore, all collective punishment measures, including restrictions on freedom of movement across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, demolition of homes, residency revocations and closure of towns, must be ended.

19. His Government strongly condemned the occupying regime's continued illegal settlement expansion and land confiscation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, which was a grave violation of international law. It considered the Golan an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and reaffirmed that all discriminatory and illegal policies imposed on the Syrian population, including the construction and expansion of settlements and the presence of Israeli army bases in and around Syrian civilian areas, constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant United Nations

resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention. The international community must uphold its political and legal responsibilities to end the occupation of all Arab lands, including the occupied Palestinian territories, and support the mandate of the Special Committee. He reaffirmed his Government's unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their legitimate resistance against the occupation and their quest to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and establish a sovereign Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital.

20. **Mr. Bachman** (Israel) said that the human rights situation was critical in Areas A and B, over which the Palestinian Authority had complete civil control and either total or significant security control, as well as in Gaza, over which Hamas had had de facto control since 2007. The rights to life, to protest and to freedom of expression, as well as the safety of women and girls, were in severe danger. Various human rights groups had reported on the physical assaults, arbitrary arrests and torture of detainees committed with impunity by the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and by Hamas police and security forces in Gaza. However, human rights were not the true focus of the current meeting, the biased report or the twisted Special Committee that had prepared it; the purpose was clearly to bash Israel. Every year, the Special Committee produced an account that ignored the severe human rights violations committed by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority against the Israelis and their own people. The report failed to mention the historical events by which Israel had gained control of those areas, the actions taken by Israel in self-defence or its attempts to reach solutions and build bridges.

21. His delegation therefore wished to fill in some of the holes in the spoiled report and provide a real picture of the situation on the ground. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, Israel was ranked 30th in the world, while the Palestinian Authority was ranked 108th. Some of the countries that supported or sponsored the resolutions under the current agenda item had terrible human rights records, proof of the underlying double standard and hypocrisy that characterized the anti-Israel agenda. Israel was a democratic nation that had made great achievements in science, culture, medicine, literature and technology. It had gained control of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Sinai desert during the Six-Day War in 1967, which had been motivated by self-defence rather than expansionism or maximalism. Israel had endured yet another war before signing a historic peace agreement with Egypt based on the principle of land for peace, which, 40 years later, remained a pillar of strategic stability in the volatile region. Such an



approach could not be implemented on the other side of the Jordan Rift Valley. No one was deluded into believing that the Assad regime had any credibility for making peace or maintaining stability.

22. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking on a point of order, asked the representative of Israel to limit himself to the agenda item under discussion and not to address any other matters because there was no time to waste listening to those travesties.

23. **Mr. Bachman** (Israel) said that the West Bank, or ancient Judea, and biblical Samaria had been under the British Mandate prior to May 1948, at which time the Arab Legion of Jordan had crossed the international border in the Jordan Valley and had illegitimately occupied the region. The 1949 General Armistice Agreement between the Hashemite Jordan Kingdom and Israel explicitly stated that the demarcation line, known as the Green Line, was not and should not be considered a border, but rather a military line. Israel had therefore not crossed any agreed international border when it had taken control of the West Bank in 1967. The West Bank had not been taken from any Palestinian sovereign entity, as one had not existed at the time; it had been taken from the aggressor by the self-defender. Consequently, the Jewish claim to the region, where the Jewish nation had originated, and Israel's presence there were legitimate. The future status of the region should be negotiated directly and bilaterally, as had been agreed by both parties and the international community under existing, binding agreements.

24. His Government did not wish to control the Palestinians. Since the Oslo Accords, it had offered the Palestinians several plans to end the current situation, with far-reaching concessions, but all had been rejected or ignored. Following the Camp David Summit, the Palestinian Authority had responded with the second intifada. Following the Annapolis conference, Hamas had responded by launching over 750 rockets into Israel. While Mahmoud Abbas claimed to support the two-State solution when speaking English, his Arabic statements reflected his complete commitment to the full exercise of the so-called claim of return, which would turn Israel into a Palestinian state.

25. Israel had withdrawn from Gaza in 2005, ending the so-called occupation, and two years later, Hamas terrorists had rejected the Palestinian Authority and built an underground city of terror. In those two years, there had been no so-called occupation or blockade, and yet, peace had not been established. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority must be held accountable for the disastrous human rights situation in Gaza. If the ongoing Palestinian terror ceased, there would be no need for

restrictions or a blockade to protect Israeli civilians. However, as long as Hamas was actively dedicated to the destruction of Israel and continued to amass an arsenal of rockets, his Government would continue to do whatever necessary to protect its citizens, as any Government would do. The disputed issues between the Israelis and Palestinians were much more likely to be solved through direct negotiations. Unilateral attempts to predetermine the results of negotiations or bypass negotiations via multilateral international institutions with clear one-sided agendas were doomed to fail.

26. **Mr. El Mezouaghi** (Morocco) said that, in 2018, there had been unprecedented developments on the ground on the Palestinian issue, particularly with regard to Jerusalem. As Chair of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Morocco reiterated its call to refrain from taking any unilateral position that would alter the legal status of Jerusalem and threaten peace efforts in the region.

27. UNRWA played a central role in alleviating the suffering of Palestinian refugees. Given the Agency's budgetary deficit, his delegation welcomed the efforts of all stakeholders to support its work and invited all partners to provide additional contributions. Morocco had consistently called for an end to all forms of violence and policies directed against the Palestinian people. Regrettably, Israel continued to expand settlements, destroy houses and carry out other practices that were in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, further undermining peace efforts.

28. It was the duty of the international community to break the current deadlock and bring both Israel and Palestine back to the negotiating table to engage in sincere, time-bound negotiations which would ultimately result in a genuine two-State solution, on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, in line with international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, thus permitting both Israel and Palestine to live in peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

29. **Mr. Madriz** (Nicaragua) said that the Government of Nicaragua fully supported the Palestinian cause and would continue to call for a two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, in which both countries could coexist in cooperation, harmony and security. Additionally, his delegation welcomed the pledges to support UNRWA.

30. Peace and stability in the region could only be achieved through negotiations and with full implementation of the relevant General Assembly and

Security Council resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). His delegation had always supported all initiatives aimed at achieving peace, unity and cooperation in the region through dialogue and negotiation, and called for increased national, regional and international efforts in that regard.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

31. **Mr. Bachman** (Israel) said that much patience was required to sit idly and listen to countless accusations, especially when they had been presented by representatives of countries that could stand to learn from Israeli practices, particularly in the treatment of the Palestinians. Their statements depicted Israel as an evil superpower, but a visit to the country would show how contradictory those comments were to the situation on the ground.

32. With regard to the accusation that Israel was activating a war machine, there was nothing farther from the truth. From the inception of the State of Israel, the armed forces had been called the Israel Defense Forces, unlike any other country. The emphasis was on defence because Israel was surrounded by countries that had been unable to accept the very existence of a Jewish State. That aggression was channelled into teaching generation after generation of children to hate Jews and, specifically, the Jewish State of Israel. As a result, his Government invested efforts in protecting its citizens, unlike the Palestinians, who knowingly fired from densely populated civilian areas into exclusively civilian areas in Israel, committing a double war crime. And yet, Member States in the Fourth Committee preferred to discuss his country's efforts to defend itself, which, unfortunately, had obviously resulted in casualties. The Israel Defense Forces exercised self-restraint like no other army, particularly in the Middle East. Furthermore, his Government had invested billions in the Iron Dome defence system, which no other nation had succeeded in developing. Israel was proud of that technology, which had been developed to counter the terrible effects of the missiles launched from Gaza, and the strategic contribution it had made to stabilizing the Middle East. While some Member States had referred to Israel as a destabilizing component, it was, in fact, an island of stability and democracy in the Middle East, and he hoped that those States could enjoy such an environment in the future.

33. In the Middle East, there was no place for weakness, particularly for a minority group. Other minorities in the region, such as the Kurds and Assyrians, envied and admired Israel, which, as a Jewish minority in the region, had not only achieved serenity

but was a flourishing country. Even before the establishment of the State of Israel, it had been the victim of terrible aggression by neighbouring countries and the entire Arab world, and often the Islamic world as well. However, it had to be a strong victim, or it would cease to exist. Unfortunately, the Palestinians opted to live in constant misery. If they could put their hatred of Jews and Israel behind them, accept the presence of a Jewish State, set aside their military capabilities and solve their internal problems, they would find an authentic partner for peace.

34. **Mr. Shaddad** (Jordan), responding to the claim made by the representative of Israel that the Jordanian army had previously occupied the West Bank, wished to recall that the West Bank had become a part of Jordan following a request from the Palestinians themselves, who had been given half of the seats in the Jordanian Parliament in the following election. His delegation found it strange that Jordan should be mentioned within the Fourth Committee in that context, as there had been no illegal occupation.

35. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that she was compelled to reply to the hostile statement and multiple distortions made by the representative of Israel. Her delegation could not accept the open disparagement of Member States, including the members of the Special Committee, or the callous ridicule of the Fourth Committee's serious efforts to address the critical violations of international law perpetrated by Israel as an occupying Power. The international community should not remain silent as the delegation of Israel mocked international law and audaciously claimed that everyone was wrong and only Israel was right.

36. None of the delegations were bashing Israel. The reports presented under the current agenda item were not biased; there was extensive evidence, some of which had been gathered by principled Israeli human rights organizations, such as B'Tselem, Peace Now and Yesh Din. Even as the Israeli Government escalated hostilities and punitive measures against human rights defenders to hide the truth, important work continued to be done to expose and document the countless violations perpetrated against the Palestinian people, which, in many cases, constituted war crimes. Calls for the cessation of those crimes had nothing to do with so-called hatred of Jews or the Jewish religion. Such offensive claims distorted the realities of the conflict, which was about the oppression of the Palestinian people and the colonization and de facto annexation of their land by a ruthless, violent and illegal occupation. Furthermore, the claim that the Palestinians sought to have it all was baseless. As had been fully documented

by impartial international and Israeli organizations on the ground, it was Israel that obstructed every peace initiative with endless excuses and preconditions in order to buy itself more time to swallow up Palestinian land and impose its plan for greater Israel.

37. The Fourth Committee had heard further excuses attempting to justify the brutal occupation and shameless claims about the inferiority of indigenous Palestinians, as if they were an uncivilized people rather than a people debilitated by decades of oppression and colonization. The delegation of Israel had questioned the existence of the Palestinian State, even after having admitted that the land upon which the State of Israel had been established under General Assembly resolution 181 (II) had been called Palestine, and even after the Palestinians had agreed to a painful compromise to accept their State on only 22 per cent of their historic homeland. The Palestinians had recognized the State of Israel and its right to exist, but Israel had never recognized the State of Palestine or the simple right of its people to live freely and in dignity in an independent State of their own. While Israel merely paid lip service to the two-State solution and made it increasingly difficult to realize, her Government had drafted legislation in countless United Nations resolutions, which were supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States. She wondered why the representative of Israel continued to ignore those facts and why the international community must continue to hear such libellous claims against her delegation and others that had voted in favour of those resolutions as a matter of principle and on a clear basis of international law, rather than on the falsely claimed hatred of Jews.

38. The representative of Israel had belittled the statements made in the Fourth Committee, calling them a mutation of reality when, in fact, they barely touched upon the dismal reality of Palestinian life under occupation. The long-term failure to hold Israel accountable for its crimes had surely emboldened such derisive and dismissive behaviour, as it had emboldened the cruelty towards the Palestinian people, manifested in blatant human rights violations and increasingly frightening incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. Palestinians, including children, were deemed by some Israeli officials to be animals, insects or snakes, threatened with extermination and demonized as terrorists. To conflate an entire civilian population with a minority of militants among them in order to rationalize the merciless brutality of the occupation was deplorable, inhumane and dangerous.

39. Her delegation appealed to the representative of Israel to stop lecturing about his country's stellar democracy. A true democracy did not legislate

discrimination against entire segments of its population based on religion and ethnicity or behave as an extremist theocracy or an apartheid State. It certainly did not impose a foreign occupation on another people for over half a century. Israel did not have the most moral army in the world, to which the hundreds of thousands of children who had been killed, injured, maimed or orphaned could tragically attest.

40. Her delegation was reassured by the principled statements made by many other delegations, including on behalf of major groups, which had more than sufficiently responded to the distortions of the Israeli delegation, and requested their continued, invaluable support. Despite many misfortunes and their miserable situation, the Palestinian people were fortunate to benefit from the solidarity, kindness and assistance extended to them from countries around the world, which would hopefully one day be translated into the real change needed for peace and justice to become a reality.

41. **Mr. Bachman** (Israel), responding to the representative of the Palestinian Authority, said that the support of the majority of Member States did not mean that a decision had merit or was just, as had been witnessed for decades by the ritual adoption of countless anti-Israel resolutions. As a democracy, his Government was proud to have non-governmental organizations that were critical of its practices. Any such organization active under the Palestinian Authority or in Gaza would be eliminated immediately. If there was no hatred of Jews, he wondered why there were there terrorist attacks against Jews all over the world and why some television shows in many Arab States taught hatred and made terrible claims, for example, that Jews slaughtered children and drank their blood. While the Romans had referred to the land as Palestine in order to provoke the Jews, the historic Philistines had no connection to the Palestinians of today. The official recognition of Israel by the Palestinians constituted empty words. In reality, there had been ceaseless terror from both Ramallah and Gaza for decades.

42. Responding to the comment that Israel shot to kill, he said that nothing was further from the truth. Hamas sent children to the frontlines for the express purpose of provoking a discussion on his Government's practices, but no one mentioned his country's need to defend itself in the face of so much terror. He once again called upon the Palestinians to stop playing the victim and approaching the international community for help; his Government was willing to talk. There was no need to waste the time and resources of the United Nations.



43. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Israel, an occupying authority, lied and created stories to justify its occupation; to steal land, resources and riches; and to carry out attacks, bombings, killings, demolitions, displacements and countless violations against the Palestinian people. Any attempt to trick the world would not mask the ugliness of the occupation. Israel had defied hundreds of international resolutions calling for an end to the occupation and its withdrawal from the occupied territories. It was the source of chronic daily suffering experienced by the Palestinian people and Syrians in Golan, infringing on their rights to education, health care, work, food, construction, freedom of movement and sovereignty over natural resources, as well as their right to live in their own territory. The occupying authority had built walls of isolation, demolished housing and practised systematic terrorism through arbitrary detentions and unjust sentences for Palestinians and Syrians. In the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel had supported Nusrah Front terrorists and other terrorist groups aligned with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, treated their injured in Israeli hospitals and visited with their leaders. It had destroyed more than 260 villages and farms in the occupied Golan and had displaced half a million inhabitants. It had targeted structures within the Syrian territory, in flagrant violation of international law and the 1974 ceasefire, and had planted approximately one million mines in occupied Golan. As a result, 200 children had died and 329,000 had been disabled for life. It had committed countless other offences as well. He therefore called on the representative of Israel to end the falsifications and lies, as they would not erase the shameful history of Israeli occupation.

*The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.*