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SPECIAL COMMITTEE CALLS FOR SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL

FOR 'CULTURE OF IMPUNITY' REGARDING ARAB RIGHTS IN OCCUPIED LANDS

Hamas Faulted for Refusal to Uphold Quartet Conditions As Fourth Committee Takes up Report on Violations in Palestine, Syrian Golan

In addition to recommendations made last year, the General Assembly should ask the Security Council to consider imposing sanctions on Israel if it persisted in ignoring its international obligations, the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) heard this morning as it took up the report of the Special Committee on Israeli practices in occupied Arab lands.

As he introduced the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for the Committee's consideration, its Chairman, Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, said Israel had once again denied its members access to the occupied lands, and called for an end to the culture of impunity characterizing that country's actions there by all available means.

He said the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories had deteriorated to an unprecedented extent which, if left unattended, would lead to further violence, destruction, despair and hatred, as well as a total collapse of Palestinian community life. The hopes engendered by the democratic changes in the Palestinian leadership and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip had been shattered, while the persistence of Israeli control of Gaza's airspace as well as its maritime and land borders impeded economic recovery. On the other hand, the absence of a clear commitment by the Hamas-led Palestinian Government to uphold the Quartet's conditions – adherence to non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements – had led to the suspension by major donors of financial assistance. That boycott, situation, combined with Israel's withholding of customs and tax revenues, had triggered a major crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with no apparent solution in sight.

The representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine described the overall impact of illegal Israeli policies on Palestinian human rights as "catastrophic", stressing that Israel must be held accountable and compelled to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel must comply with the agreements it had signed with the Palestinian side, including those regarding the transfer of money belonging to the Palestinian Authority.

She said Israel continued to engage in violations of international law and its military occupation was itself a violation of the inalienable right of Palestinians to self-determination. As reflected in the Special Committee's report, Palestinian fatalities had mounted over the past year, as a result of Israel's extrajudicial executions and military raids. The killings of Palestinian civilians were in flagrant violation of the inalienable right to life.

Syria's representative pointed out that numerous United Nations resolutions had rejected the 1981 Knesset decision imposing Israeli law on the occupied Syrian Golan. The Commission on Human Rights had also adopted a resolution reaffirming the illegality of imposing Israeli laws on the Golan, and called on Israel not to impose its national identification cards on Syrian citizens. That text also called for an end to the repression of civilians.

Noting Israel's adoption of expansionist and colonialist policies, he said it had expanded 44 Israeli settlements built on the ruins of Arab villages, and announced that the number of settlers would be increased by 50,000. Israel also planned the relocation of people in the northern part of the occupied Syrian Golan to the south. The mines that the Israelis had left on Syrian agricultural lands were a real threat to Syrian citizens, having caused 364 fatalities, a majority of them children. Israel also continued to bury nuclear waste close to the Syrian border.

The representative of South Africa said the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories could not be addressed in isolation. The use of air strikes in heavily populated areas, extrajudicial killings and illegal detentions contravened international humanitarian law while giving rise to more violence. On the other hand, Palestinian militants' firing of Qassam rockets on Israel should also stop.

As Israel's security was interwoven with that of its neighbours, lasting peace and security could only be achieved through the full integration of the State of Israel

into the community of nations in the Middle East, he said. It was imperative that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Mahmoud Abbas hold direct negotiations without delay. Any settlement must be mutually agreed by the parties within the framework of the Quartet's Road Map.

While most speakers expressed their regret over Israel's refusal to grant the Special Committee access to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, others emphasized that it must continue its work until the liberation of the occupied Arab territories was complete. Some called for the dismantling of the separation barrier built on Palestinian territory and for the payment of compensation to those who had suffered material damage from its construction. Most speakers denounced the increased violence in the Gaza Strip and called on the parties to adhere to the provisions of the Road Map.

Also speaking this morning were the representatives of Jordan, Cuba, Kuwait, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates.

The Fourth Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. tomorrow, 7 November, to continue its general debate on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

Background

Meeting this morning to begin its consideration of Israeli practices affecting the human rights of Arab peoples in occupied lands, the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the thirty-eighth report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (document [A/61/500](#)).

The report notes that the Government of Israel again denied the Special Committee access to the occupied territories, and that although the prevailing security situation prevented it from visiting the region at all — forcing the postponement of its planned visit in August to November — it received ample evidence from a wide range of sources attesting to the seriously deteriorating human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, where the impunity with which Israel operates must be brought to an end by all available means.

Section V of the report, summarizing the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories, focuses on issues of particular concern in the light of the testimonies and material received: the right to self-determination; the right to freedom of movement; the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to just and favourable conditions of work; the right to health and to education; the right to life, liberty and personal security; and the right to freedom of opinion and association.

According to the report, sources described the combined effects of human rights violations by Israeli policies and practices such as: the unabated expansion of the wall, which cuts off whole communities from their livelihoods and jobs, as well as schools, universities, health and social facilities and families; the diversion of water sources; and restrictions on freedom of movement for Palestinians. The accumulation of problems is further exacerbated by the unprecedented humanitarian crisis, the excessive use of force by parties to the conflict, the continuing absence of the rule of law in the Territories and the unwillingness or inability of Israeli and Palestinian leaders to resume negotiations.

The report notes that the Syrian authorities submitted on 2 August its thirty-eighth report on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of Syrian Arab citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan, covering the period June 2005 through July 2006. According to that report, the Israeli settlement policy and land confiscation continued unabated, and the occupation authorities pursued their policy of using water resources for themselves. Mines remained a persistent threat and the Israeli authorities continued to bury their nuclear waste close to the Syrian border. Workers suffered from discrimination in hiring, wages and taxation, while women were still deprived of basic health care. Women and children were among some 2,500 Syrians held in Israeli detention facilities for the last 38 years.

Never since its inception has the Special Committee confronted such anger and misery among the Palestinian people and other Arabs in occupied territories, or disrespect for their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, the report says. The Palestinians see themselves as constant subjects of collective punishment, while Israel's aid cut-off and non-payment of taxes and revenues since the establishment of the elected Hamas-led Government in March is perceived as economic sanctions. Palestinians are questioning the role of the United Nations in the current crisis and feel that their plight has been neglected by the international community. Meanwhile, the construction of the wall proceeds unabated, despite the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and Assembly resolution ES-10/15, and the Secretary-General has yet to establish the register of damage mentioned in that text.

According to the report, the Special Committee supports the Human Rights Council's call for the dispatch of an urgent fact-finding mission on the human rights situation in the Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967. The time has come for Israel to grant compensation for the multifaceted damage inflicted on the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a consequence of military incursion and the construction of the wall. The Special Committee also recommends that the General Assembly, among other things, request the Security Council to consider sanctions against Israel, ensure that other States do not assist in any way the construction of the separation wall and encourage the Quartet to fully implement the Road Map.

The report also contains the Special Committee's recommendation that the Israeli Government, among other things, recognize the de jure and de facto applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the occupied Syrian Golan, stop its policy of confiscating land and expanding Jewish settlements that affect the territorial integrity of a future Palestinian State, restore freedom of movement for the Palestinian population, stop building the separation wall, facilitate the reopening of the Gaza airport and seaport, and pursue the implementation of the Road Map.

According to the report, the Special Committee urges the Palestinian Authority, among other things, to exert control over Palestinian armed groups, arrest and bring to justice those responsible for the planning of, or participation in, attacks against civilians, implement reforms for greater democratization in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and comply with the requirements of the Road Map, as laid out by the Quartet.

Also before the Committee was the Secretary-General's report on work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (document [A/61/330](#)), which gives an overview of that body's meetings as well as the activities of the Department of Public Information on the issue.

According to the Secretary-General's report on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (document [A/61/329](#)), the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale dated 29 July to the Government of Israel, requesting information on any steps it has or envisages taking concerning the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/107. No reply had been received at the time of the report's preparation.

Another report of the Secretary-General, on 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 (document [A/61/331](#)), states that on 29 June, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Government of Israel, requesting information on steps taken or envisaged concerning the implementation of the relevant resolution. No reply has been received to that request or to the Secretary-General's 29 June note verbale addressed to all permanent missions.

According to the Secretary-General's report on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (document [A/61/328](#)), Israel has also not replied to his note verbale, dated 29 June, in which he requested information on steps taken or envisaged concerning the implementation of Assembly resolution 60/106.

The Secretary-General's report on the Occupied Syrian Golan (document [A/61/327](#)) notes that Israel has not replied to a similar note verbale, also dated 29 June, regarding implementation of Assembly resolution 60/108. Similarly, no replies have been received to the Secretary-General's note verbale of the same date sent to Member States.

Introduction of Reports

PRASAD KARIYAWASAM (Sri Lanka), Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, introduced that body's report, saying 2006 would definitely be a peculiar year in the record of its work. Owing to spending limitations, the Special Committee's yearly field visit had been rescheduled from June to August, but subsequently had to be postponed because of the security situation in the Middle East. The field visit would now take place from 11 to 22 November.

He said the report was based essentially on documents, surveys and case studies of Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations and on articles and materials from United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations. Once again, the Special Committee had been denied access to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and was of the view that the culture of impunity characterizing Israel's actions there must be brought to an end by all available means.

Hopes engendered by the democratic changes in the Palestinian leadership and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip had been shattered, he said. On the contrary, the persistence of Israeli control of Gaza's airspace as well as its maritime and land borders had impeded chances for economic recovery. In addition, the absence of a clear commitment by Hamas to uphold the Quartet's conditions – adherence to non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements – had led to a boycott situation. The suspension by major donors of financial assistance, combined with Israel's withholding of customs and tax revenues, had triggered a major crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with no apparent solution in view.

Violence had been renewed on 25 June, the date of the abduction of an Israeli soldier, he said, noting that Israel's subsequent "Summer Rain" operation had led to the complete naval, air and land blockade of the Gaza Strip. The use of missile and artillery fire, had allegedly taken the lives of 156 Palestinians, including 81 civilians, 33 children and 9 women in the period 25 June through 31 July. In the West Bank, the expansion of the separation wall went on unabated, affecting 99 Israeli settlements and 55 Palestinian localities. Only 118 km of the total planned 702 km-long wall now followed the Green Line. The portion of the wall surrounding Jerusalem would cut off 220,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank.

He said the effects of the wall were worsened by the closure system, which aggravated the humanitarian crisis and poverty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and severely hampered access by Palestinians to health and education services, employment, markets and social or religious networks. Large segments of the Palestinian population perceived checkpoints as persistent forms of collective punishment. Many students, teachers and medical patients, as well as ordinary working people had been subjected to ill-treatment by Israeli soldiers, including beatings, stripping and being made to sit in the mud or to stand for hours in the sun, before being allowed to cross checkpoints.

The Special Committee had received detailed reports about extensive destruction of property and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip during operation "Summer Rain", including that of the only power plant, which provided 45 per cent of Gaza's electricity, he said. That had seriously hampered the functioning of health facilities, water wells, sewage disposal facilities and access to water in buildings of Gaza City.

As compared to 2005, the situation of Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails had not improved, he said, noting that there had been an increase of 900 persons. As of June 2006, about 360 children had been detained in Israeli prisons, a few dozen more than in 2005. They were enduring, like adults, similar torture, medical negligence and other forms of ill-treatment. There were 120 women detained, a relative decrease since last year.

Turning to Syria, he said official reports confirmed that the Israeli settlement and land confiscation policy continued unabated, with the 44 existing Israeli settlements expanding. On the eve of elections, the Israeli Government had announced a massive project to encourage settlements in the occupied Golan, where the occupation authorities pursued their policy of using water resources. Israeli mines had been a persistent danger, threatening the population and farm animals, while Israel's continued burying of nuclear waste close to the Syrian border remained a cause of acute concern.

He said the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories had reached an unprecedented level of deterioration which, if it remained unattended, would lead to further violence, destruction, despair and hatred, as well as a total collapse of Palestinian community life. The path taken by the Quartet and some major donors throughout 2006, combined with Israel's non-payment of customs and tax revenues, did not seem to bring about the contemplated results and was perceived by Palestinians as economic sanctions imposed after the democratic election of their leaders. Impunity by Israel must be urgently brought to an end.

In conclusion, he said the Special Committee had essentially reiterated its recommendations of last year, with the addition that the General Assembly should request the Security Council to consider sanctions against Israel if it persisted in paying no attention to its international obligations. It was to be hoped that the Assembly and the Council would take appropriate steps to undo the current situation and encourage Israel's compliance with all its international obligations.

Statements

NADYA RASHEED, Observer for Palestine, called for the international community's immediate intervention, drawing specific attention to the Special Committee's report. Over 39 years, Palestinians had endured threats to their national existence and systematic violations to their human rights. The occupation was a system of control, backed by legal, political, economic and psychological structures intent on keeping them under submission.

Israel continued to engage in violations of international law and its military occupation was itself a violation of Palestinians' inalienable right to self-determination, she said. As reflected in the Special Committee's report Palestinian fatalities had mounted over the past year, as a result of Israel's extrajudicial executions and military raids. Its killings of Palestinian civilians constituted flagrant violations of the inalienable right to life.

Regarding the separation wall, she said that if Israel continued its construction, some 60,500 West Bank Palestinians would reside in the closed zone between the wall and the Green Line. More than 500,000 living within 1 km of it would be cut off from jobs and family. The Observer Mission of Palestine was studying the Secretary-General's report on the Register of Damage in connection with the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem.

On Gaza, she said any attempts to distort the facts must be rejected. Israel had not ended its control over that area, as seen in its control of Gaza air and maritime space, as well as its external borders. The closure of the Karni crossing for substantial periods had seriously impacted Gaza, resulting in denial of access for the most basic necessities. The occupying Power had destroyed Palestinian Authority properties and its new tactic in the Gaza Strip of letting loose

deafening sonic booms had caused widespread fear. Those activities had caused immeasurable hardships to refugees, who accounted for nearly 70 per cent of Gaza's population.

Describing the overall impact of illegal Israeli policies on Palestinian human rights as "catastrophic", she said Israel must be held accountable and compelled to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Further, it should comply with agreements signed with the Palestinian side, including the transfer of money belonging to the Palestinian Authority under the 1994 Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The international community was urged to help in attainment of a final settlement with two States living in peace and security.

MANAR TALEB (Syria), expressing regret over the denial of access for the Special Committee to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, said it should continue its work until the liberation of the occupied Arab territories. Israel's latest aggression against Lebanon showed it was continuing its policy of rejecting peace, while its refusal to grant access to the Special Committee showed it continued on a path of non-compliance with international law.

He stressed that international law, represented by numerous United Nations resolutions, rejected the 1981 Knesset decision imposing Israeli law on the occupied Syrian Golan. Assembly resolution 40/60 of 2005 stated that all legislative measures taken, or to be taken, by Israel to change the Syrian nature of the occupied Syrian Golan were null and void, in violation of international law and of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Commission on Human Rights had adopted a resolution about the violation of human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan that reaffirmed the illegality of imposing Israeli laws on the territory and called on Israel not to impose Israeli identification cards on Syrian citizens. It also called for an end to the repression of civilians.

Israel had adopted expansionist and colonialist policies through the expansion of 44 Israeli settlements built on the ruins of Arab villages, he said. It had announced that settlements would be expanded and that the number of settlers would be increased by 50,000. Israel also planned the relocation of people in the northern part to the south. The mines left by the Israelis on Syrian lands, including agricultural lands, were a real threat to Syrian citizens and had resulted in 364 fatalities, a majority of them children. Israel also buried nuclear waste close to the Syrian border.

Addressing the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, he said the Israeli authorities had exploited the silence, negligence and impotence of the international community in the face of Israeli crimes and genocide. Syria fully supported the recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee and asked for compensation for the losses in the occupied territories as a result of military operations. The Arab-Israeli conflict was the oldest conflict on the agenda of the United Nations, and its just and fair resolution was not impossible, given the political will for peace, based on international law.

ADEL ADALEH (Jordan) said the Special Committee should continue to carry out its mandate until Israel ended its occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, and a final peace agreement was reached. The question of Palestine was at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its resolution could not be achieved through unilateral measures or irresponsible actions. Building a separation wall would not contribute to peace, which could only be achieved through partnership, mutual trust and respect for the fundamental rights of the Middle Eastern peoples.

He said the Special Committee's report, as well as that of the Commission on Human Rights, indicated that the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza had deteriorated to a dangerous level. The Israeli military had maintained its shelling of Gaza, with an estimated 200 to 250 bombs falling each day. The number of casualties had increased and many Palestinians had been detained. Targeted killings had continued and the number of checkpoints had increased to over 550. The West Bank was now divided into four distinct areas, with Palestinian cities cut off from each other.

The Government of Israel continued its unlawful settlement activity and to construct the separation wall on Palestinian Territory, he said, calling on the Israeli Government to implement its obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access, guarantee free movement of persons and goods, and facilitate humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians. Israeli practices on the Golan Heights, including continuing settlement activity, were in violation of international law and of the Geneva Convention. Jordan called on Israel to desist from all illegal practices in the Arab occupied territories, and urged all concerned parties to work towards achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

REBECA HERNÁNDEZ TOLEDANO (Cuba), expressing regret that the Special Committee had been unable to gain access to the Occupied Territories, said it was clear that Palestinians continued to be massacred and that the international community had not established effective mechanisms to end that tragedy. Threats of veto by some on the Security Council had affected the development of a resolution that would move towards achieving a balance in the situation. Further, the usual double standard and threat of veto had led to paralysis. Last June, the United States had vetoed draft resolutions on Israel's military operations in Gaza.

She said the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories had worsened, as this year's poverty figures had risen to 70 per cent in the Gaza Strip. Israel had attacked vital services and destroyed infrastructure, and Cuba denounced its intensive confiscation measures, the expansion of settlements and violations of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Regarding the separation wall, she said its continued construction was in violation of the consultative opinion of the International Court of Justice and the July 2004 General Assembly resolution. The wall was already 336 km long, with 102 km under construction that would isolate Palestinians living in East Jerusalem from the West Bank. It stood in the way of achieving the inalienable rights of Palestinians and a solution to the question of Palestine, as did Israel's merciless colonialism. Moreover, the wall had created isolated sections of Palestinians who suffered economic, social and physical devastation. Without a reversal, it would be impossible to achieve the two-State solution.

Cuba reiterated its support for a registry of all those who had suffered in connection with the building of the wall, she said, expressing the hope that the international community would express the will of the International Court of Justice that Israel pay compensation to those suffering material damage from the wall's construction. Palestinians had the right to develop a sovereign State, and Cuba demanded the return of all Arab territories occupied since 1967, which was the only way towards a just and lasting peace.

SABELO SIMUYILE MAQUONGO (South Africa) said that through its continued lack of cooperation with the Special Committee, Israel was denying itself a valuable opportunity to engage meaningfully with the international community as well as undermining confidence in its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. The human rights situation in the Occupied Territories could not be addressed in isolation. The use of air strikes in heavily populated areas, extrajudicial killings and illegal detentions were contrary to international humanitarian law, merely giving rise to more violence. The firing of Qassam rockets on Israel by Palestinian militants should also stop. South Africa called for the immediate and unconditional release of members of the Palestinian Legislative Council as well as that of Corporal Gilad Shalit.

He said the Palestinian Authority's financial crisis contributed to instability and Israel's continued withholding of tax and customs revenues was the biggest single cause of the crisis and also constituted collective punishment. Ways must be found to enable the Palestinian Authority to deliver essential services. The economic embargo of the democratically elected Palestinian Government by some countries must end immediately. President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas leaders should continue their efforts to form a unity Government.

No party should take unilateral actions seeking to predetermine issues that could only be resolved through negotiation, he said. Those actions included the construction of the separation wall as well as settlement activities. The checkpoints were also a source of tension as the Palestinian people continued to be subjected to degrading treatment. They were a major stumbling block to economic growth. Israel had the right to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks, but there could be no justifications for the sometimes inhuman treatment that ordinary Palestinians were subjected to. Israel's security was interwoven with that of its neighbours and the country would never be secure while relations with its neighbours continued to be characterized by hatred and violence. Lasting peace

and security could only be achieved through the full integration of the State of Israel into the community of nations in the Middle East. It was imperative that direct negotiations between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Abbas take place without delay. Any settlement must be mutually agreed by the parties within the framework of the Quartet's Road Map.

MANSOUR AL-OLAIM ([Kuwait](#)) said the Special Committee's report highlighted the arbitrary nature of Israeli practices against Palestinians and other Arabs that were contrary to international law. Civilians continued to suffer in increasingly difficult situations. The report also underscored how Israeli practices had created victims, particularly through the destruction of agricultural lands and basic infrastructure. The ban on free movement for Palestinians had had a negative impact on their standard of living.

Israel's excessive use of force was in flagrant violation of humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, he said, reaffirming that Israel must respect the Security Council resolution on Lebanon and provide pay compensation for damages. Kuwait hoped the Council would play a more active role in the region, and that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) would enhance security. Israel must pull back to the Blue Line.

He condemned the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and called on the international community, particularly the Quartet, to end that country's repeated aggressions. It was unfortunate that such efforts had not previously prevented Israel from engaging in those policies as the international community had remained silent. Kuwait expressed its unshakable support for Palestinian independence and nationhood, with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel must respect its international commitments and cooperate with the Special Committee. Greater efforts were needed to ensure that it ended its violations of international humanitarian law. Implementation of the Road Map and related resolutions, including resolutions 242 and 195, were important, as was respect for the principle of "land for peace" in achieving a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

YASER A AZIZ AL-RUBAI ([Iraq](#)) said his country, notwithstanding its difficult circumstances, had not forgotten the suffering of the Palestinian people and supported all their rights. Israeli efforts to increase its control over Jerusalem were illegal according to General Assembly resolutions, which also recognized the rights of the Palestinian people to sovereignty, and those of Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan. United Nations resolutions also underlined the right of the people in the Occupied Territories to enjoy their natural resources, including water and land, and Israel should not exploit, waste or destroy them.

He said the damage caused by Israeli aggression should be compensated, and condemned all Israeli practices in the Occupied Territories regarding the building of settlements and seizure of water resources. As for the treatment of Palestinians in Iraq, the country suffered daily from wanton terrorist acts, which targeted everybody, including Palestinians. An investigation would be opened on attacks against Palestinians, which violated human rights.

ABDULRAHEIM OBAID SAEED ALFALAH ([United Arab Emirates](#)) said that, in spite of Israeli obstacles to prevent the Special Committee from having access to the Palestinian and Syrian Occupied Territories, measures taken to black out information on inhumane practices and human rights violations could not hide the facts surrounding those crimes. The Special Committee's report indicated the deterioration in the human rights situation of the Arab population in the Palestinian and Syrian Occupied Territories, where Israeli practices involved the demolition of homes, the destruction of properties, the desecration of holy places and the extrajudicial killings of innocent people.

He said Israel had also withheld Palestinian Authority funds, leaving it unable to pay civil servants for more than eight months. That action had deepened Palestinian anger as it had coincided with the suspension of international assistance to the Palestinian people after the election of the Hamas Government. The United Arab Emirates strongly condemned Israeli military operations in Gaza and other practices, including the construction of settlements and the "expansionist" wall. Israel had adopted unilateral measures incompatible with international humanitarian rights, including the right to self-determination.

Expressing full support for the Special Committee's position on the need to end the impunity with which Israeli carried out activities in the Occupied Territories, he called on the international community to take urgent measures, including the imposition of sanctions, should Israel continue its inhumane practices. An international commission of inquiry should be dispatched to investigate crimes in those territories and compel Israel to pay compensation. In resolving the question of Palestine and the Middle East, donors should reconsider their decision to suspend all financial and economic assistance to the Palestinian people. Regional security could be compromised if the humanitarian crisis was not urgently contained.

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