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<http://unispal.un.org>*

I. UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COORDINATOR IS ALARMED BY WEST BANK HOUSE DEMOLITIONS

The following is the text of the statement issued on 1 November 2008 by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry:

The United Nations Special Coordinator, Robert Serry, is alarmed at the recent resumption of house demolitions by Israel in the West Bank, after a freeze dating back to April of this year.

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are directly raising the UN's humanitarian concerns with the Israeli authorities, given the impact of these actions on some of the most vulnerable populations in the West Bank; with many poor families rendered destitute. The actions are also a political step back from the

commitments Israel has made and send a discouraging signal regarding its support for the strenuous and concerted efforts underway to improve conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory and build greater trust and confidence in support of the political process

The Special Coordinator calls on Israel to adhere to its commitments by reinstating a moratorium on house demolitions and protecting vulnerable civilians from displacement and loss of livelihoods.

II. QUARTET IS BRIEFED BY PARTIES ON PROGRESS OF PEACE EFFORTS

On 9 November 2008, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni briefed the Quartet on the progress of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations during their meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The following is the text of the Quartet statement issued subsequently (SG/2145):

Representatives of the Quartet - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union Javier Solana, European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner - met today, and heard from Palestinian Authority President

President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni at their request. They were joined by Quartet Representative Tony Blair.

President Abbas and Minister Livni briefed the Quartet on Palestinian-Israeli negotiating efforts since the 27 November 2007 international conference in Annapolis, Maryland, that formally launched bilateral negotiations to bring an end to the conflict

by achieving the goal of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The Palestinian and Israeli representatives reaffirmed their commitment, as stated in the Annapolis “Joint Understanding”, to vigorous, ongoing and continuous negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, as specified in previous agreements.

The parties’ representatives affirmed that, over the last year, they have engaged in direct, sustained and intensive bilateral negotiations, based on a joint work plan that included the establishment of more than 10 committees. They described how the parties have been actively engaged not only on core issues but on an array of other topics necessary to turn the two-State solution into a reality. Without minimizing the gaps and obstacles that remain, the representatives of the parties shared their assessment that the present negotiations are substantial and promising and they have succeeded in putting in place a solid negotiating structure for continued progress in the future.

President Abbas and Foreign Minister Livni stated that the parties had reached a number of mutual understandings on the principles governing their negotiating process. These include:

- the need for continuous, uninterrupted, direct, bilateral negotiations;
- the principle that nothing would be considered agreed until everything is agreed; and
- the need to reach a comprehensive agreement addressing all issues, as agreed at

Annapolis, rather than just announce agreement on selected items in isolation.

The parties’ representatives also confirmed that, as stated in the Annapolis Joint Understanding, the parties remained committed to implementation of their respective obligations under the performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the agreed mechanism for monitoring and judging road map implementation and that, unless otherwise agreed by the parties, implementation of the future peace treaty will be subject to implementation of the road map, as judged by the United States.

In addition to describing the structure of the negotiations and indicating areas in which progress has been achieved, President Abbas and Minister Livni expressed gratitude for international support provided during the last year and requested continued support from the Quartet and all members of the international community. First, they asked that the international community support the parties’ sustained efforts in the framework of the Annapolis process and that it respect the agreed principles for their negotiations as described to the Quartet.

Second, they asked that all States promote an environment conducive to peace, non-violence and the two-State solution. In this regard, they urged political and economic assistance, especially in relation to institutional and security reform, capacity-building, economic development and the fulfilment of pledges, to the legitimate Palestinian Government which has accepted the Quartet principles and respects the PLO commitments.

They asked the international community to redouble efforts to confront and deny support for extremism, incitement, terrorism and intolerance. Finally, the representatives stressed that, absent the joint request of the parties, third parties should not intervene in the bilateral negotiations. At the same time, they confirmed that international support and assistance will be vital once an agreement is reached, and that they intend to jointly consult members of the international community on this issue at the appropriate time.

The Quartet expressed its appreciation for the description by the parties of their joint efforts, which confirmed the seriousness of the Annapolis process and underscored the determination of the parties to reach a comprehensive agreement. The Quartet reiterated its commitment to supporting the parties' efforts, underlined its commitment to the irreversibility of the bilateral negotiations, pledged to respect the bilateral and confidential nature of the negotiations, and called on all States to adhere to these same commitments. The Quartet endorsed the goals set out by the parties and called on all States to lend their diplomatic and political support to that end, including by encouraging and recognizing progress to date.

The Quartet renewed its call on relevant States and international organizations to assist in the development of the Palestinian economy, to maximize the resources available to the Palestinian Authority and to contribute to the Palestinian institution-building programme in preparation for statehood, as decided during the Paris, Bethlehem and Berlin conferences. The Quartet cited Jenin as an

example of the success of reforms instituted by the Palestinian Government and of cooperation between the two sides, made possible in the context of the Annapolis process. The Quartet further welcomed the recent deployment of Palestinian security services in the Hebron governorate as a sign of the progress that has resulted from increased security cooperation. The Quartet emphasized its determination to continue to work with Israel and the Palestinian Government to facilitate access and movement, and an improvement in conditions on the ground in order to address urgent humanitarian needs, foster economic activity and improve the atmosphere for the negotiations. The Quartet reiterated its call to the parties to fully implement their obligations under phase one of the road map, including in relation to freezing settlement activity and the dismantlement of the infrastructure of terrorism.

The Quartet emphasized the importance of continuity of the peace process. The Quartet agreed that the spring of 2009 could be an appropriate time for an international meeting in Moscow.

The Quartet reaffirmed its previous statements, including the 26 September 2008, statement issued in New York. Further, welcoming the recent calls for a broader peace, the Quartet offered its support for the expansion of ongoing diplomatic efforts towards regional peace, noted the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and reaffirmed its commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).

III. SECRETARY-GENERAL IS CONCERNED AT DETERIORATING SITUATION IN GAZA AND SOUTHERN ISRAEL, URGES RESPECT OF THE CALM

The following statement was issued on 14 November 2008 by the Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (SG/SM/11926):

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned at the deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Gaza and southern Israel, and at the potential for further suffering and violence. He calls on all parties to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law.

The Secretary-General reiterates his condemnation of rocket attacks. He calls for an end to such attacks and urges full respect by all parties of the calm that has been in effect since 19 June 2008. The Secretary-General is concerned that food and other lifesaving assistance is being denied to

hundreds of thousands of people, and emphasizes that measures which increase the hardship and suffering of the civilian population of the Gaza Strip as a whole are unacceptable and should cease immediately. In particular, he calls on Israel to allow urgently the steady and sufficient supply of fuel and humanitarian assistance. He also calls on Israel to resume facilitating the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and all humanitarian agencies, including through unimpeded access for United Nations officials and humanitarian workers.

IV. COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE CONDEMNS ISRAELI DECISION TO SEAL GAZA BORDERS

On 14 November 2008, the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People made the following statement (GA/PAL/1100):

The Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People expresses its utmost alarm about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

The Bureau unreservedly condemns Israel's decision to seal the borders between the Gaza Strip and Israel, preventing the delivery of essential humanitarian assistance, including food, medical supplies and fuel. The United Nations agencies on the ground, including the United Nations

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), have warned that the tight Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip was forcing the suspension of food aid distribution to some 750,000 Gaza residents, because its warehouses had run out of food. As a result of the closure and the lack of fuel supplies, parts of Gaza experienced blackouts that affected many homes and hospitals. Such Israeli action is tantamount to collective punishment and is a violation of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The Bureau calls on the Israeli Government to immediately lift the siege on the Gaza Strip and allow humanitarian assistance to enter in order to help alleviate the plight of Gaza's residents, including women, children and the elderly, who have borne the brunt of the suffering brought about by months of closures. The Bureau of the Committee reminds Israel in most resolute terms that, as the occupying Power, it has a clear responsibility under the Fourth Geneva Convention to protect and ensure the well-being of the civilian population under its occupation.

The Bureau is also alarmed by the renewed violence in the Gaza Strip. Recent rocket fire into Israel and Israeli air strikes at Gaza have violated the five-month-old period of calm and could reignite the cycle of violence and jeopardize the political

process. The Bureau calls for a cessation of Israeli air strikes and incursions, as well as the rocket fire by Palestinian groups.

The Bureau of the Committee stresses the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law. It calls on the international community to act urgently and decisively in order to move the peace process forward towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine through the establishment of a sovereign and viable Palestinian State, on the basis of the 1967 borders. A settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) and other relevant resolutions.

V. UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE ISRAELI BLOCKADE OF GAZA

The following is the text of the statement issued on 18 November 2008 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay:

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay called today for an immediate end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza. "By function of this blockade, 1.5 million Palestinian men, women and children have been forcibly deprived of their most basic human rights for months. This is in direct contravention of international human rights and humanitarian law. It must end now," she said.

The High Commissioner further called for the Israeli authorities to facilitate the urgent passage of essential humanitarian

goods, including food, medical supplies, and fuel, to immediately allow the restoration of electricity, water and other essential services, and to lift movement restrictions preventing the passage of civilians for medical, educational and religious purposes. "Decisive steps must be taken to preserve the dignity and basic welfare of the civilian population, more than half of which are children," she added.

While welcoming the decision by Israel to allow a limited number of trucks to enter Gaza on 17 November, the High

Commissioner recalled the occupying Power's obligation to fully cease all measures that are inconsistent with its obligations under international law. "Only a full lifting of the blockade followed by a strong humanitarian response will be adequate to relieve the massive humanitarian suffering evident in Gaza today."

Calling on all sides to respect international law and the security of civilian populations, the High Commissioner also appealed for a complete cessation of Israeli air strikes and incursions, and of rocket fire by Palestinian groups.

VI. UNITED NATIONS LAUNCHES \$462 MILLION CONSOLIDATED HUMANITARIAN APPEAL FOR THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

On 19 November 2008, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes announced the launching of the 2009 Consolidated Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The executive summary of the report is reproduced below:

Executive summary

Living conditions for most Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have continued to deteriorate in 2008. The year began with a renewed sense of hope for progress, following the resumption of relations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the international community's full endorsement of the Palestinian Authority's (PA) ambitious Reform and Development Plan (PRDP). Throughout 2008, the PA has proceeded with a series of significant and tangible reforms, reducing its fiscal deficit, containing its wage bill and improving security conditions in the West Bank. However, growth targets projected in the PA's development plan have recently been revised downwards, as economic productivity continues to decline.

This is in large part due to conditions in Gaza, where the ongoing Israeli-imposed blockade has crippled the private sector, driving unprecedented numbers of Palestinians into unemployment and poverty. However, it also reflects continued uncertainties in large parts of the West Bank - notwithstanding the removal of some obstacles to movement and access during the year, data indicates an ever-increasing number of Israeli checkpoints, causing further social and economic fragmentation. Global rises in food prices over the past 12 months and reduced domestic agricultural yields due to adverse weather conditions have placed further strain on Palestinian coping mechanisms. This has led in turn to further increases in household food insecurity in both Gaza and the West Bank, despite ongoing large-scale food aid programmes.

The situation has been exacerbated by ongoing internal Palestinian conflict. Despite sustained regional efforts at fostering internal Palestinian reconciliation, the West Bank and Gaza remain divided, with ordinary Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, paying the price. Although the intense internal bloodshed of 2007 in Gaza was not repeated in 2008, violence has continued. Internal divisions have also led to disruption of basic services, including health, water and sanitation and community services for the most vulnerable. Casualties as a result of Israeli-Palestinian conflict have also decreased since an Egyptian-brokered “truce” between Gaza and southern Israel took effect in June 2008. However, improvements in the security situation have not been accompanied by a reduction in border restrictions for persons and goods and Gaza's established crossings remain for the most part sealed off. Tunnel smuggling now plays a significant role in the economy.

Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are facing a crisis that affects all aspects of their daily life. It is, above all, a crisis of human dignity, with the entire population unable to exercise its basic rights – to movement, self-determination, employment and basic services. They are increasingly left dependent on humanitarian assistance, largely in the form of food aid and cash handouts. In view of the increased need for relief assistance, United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) are seeking a more focused humanitarian response in 2009, with better targeted interventions designed to meet the most urgent needs of vulnerable populations. This has been achieved through a planning

process that was more consultative and inclusive than in previous years, involving several hundred actors in a series of regional and sectoral workshops. The process produced a focused Common Humanitarian Action Plan and prioritized response plans in each sector.

During 2009, humanitarian assistance programmes will include a range of protection strategies that seek to address access related constraints, including through improved monitoring and more strategic advocacy efforts. To ensure complementarity with the PRDP, and in line with global humanitarian reform efforts, the Occupied Palestinian Territory CAP 2009 includes an early recovery component. This does not imply additional projects, but rather a more strategic approach to humanitarian assistance, through identification of those relief activities with potential for contributing to longer term development goals. This approach will be further developed in 2009 to ensure harmony between immediate and longer term planning tools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The budget for the 2009 CAP stands at \$462,309,538. The document brings together 159 projects, including 96 from the NGO community and 63 from UN agencies. Through this appeal, humanitarian agencies will work to mitigate the worst impacts of the crisis on the most vulnerable Palestinians and stem further deterioration in living conditions, whilst also advocating for fundamental rights for Palestinians, in accordance with agreed principles of international humanitarian and human rights law.

VII. NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT ADOPTS COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

On 24 November 2008, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed a letter to the Secretary-General in which he transmitted the communiqué on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, adopted by the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on 20 November 2008. The following is the text of the communiqué (A/63/571-S/2008/735):

The Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement met in New York at United Nations Headquarters on 12 November 2008 and considered, inter alia, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) express their serious concerns regarding the deterioration of the situation on the ground and the extensive hardships being endured by the Palestinian people as a result of ongoing violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. NAM also expresses concern at the lack of progress made in the peace process in the year that has passed since the Annapolis Conference, which generated momentum and high expectations for advancement of the process towards the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

NAM expresses grave concern about Israel's continued use of military force against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which continues to cause death and injury to civilians, including children, and destruction to Palestinian property and infrastructure, as well as its continued collective punishment

of the Palestinian people by measures that constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law, violate virtually all of the human rights of the Palestinian people, and continue to devastate socio-economic conditions.

NAM expresses particular concern about the dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and reiterates its call for the immediate lifting of Israel's inhumane closure and siege of Gaza, by which it continues to obstruct the movement of persons and goods, including food, medical, fuel and other essential supplies. In addition, NAM calls again on the occupying Power to remove the hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles that are restricting freedom of movement in the West Bank, causing serious damage to the Palestinian economy and severely undermining the Territory's contiguity and integrity.

NAM also expresses grave concern about Israel's continuing settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in and around East Jerusalem. In grave violation of international law and its commitments in the peace process, Israel continues and has accelerated its confiscation of Palestinian land, construction and expansion of settlements and the Wall and its transfer of Israeli settlers to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. NAM condemns Israel's illegal

settlement activities, which are undermining the peace process and seriously threatening the viability of the two-State solution of Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security, and reiterates the call for their immediate cessation. NAM also expresses its alarm at the rising incidence of Israeli settler violence, harassment and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and their properties and calls upon the occupying Power to take all necessary measures to bring an end to the settler violence and lawlessness and to hold the perpetrators of crimes against Palestinian civilians accountable for their actions.

In the light of this critical situation on the ground and lack of progress in the peace process, NAM urges all concerned parties, including the Quartet, to exert the necessary efforts to bring a halt to Israel's illegal practices, including its settlement activities and collective punishment measures, in order to stem the deterioration of the situation, alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, and create conditions on the ground that are conducive to the advancement of the peace process and its ultimate success.

NAM stresses that the current transitional period is also a fragile period in

which the international community, including the Security Council, must not remain complacent and must be active in shouldering its legal, political and moral responsibilities vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and redoubling its commitment and efforts in support of the peace process negotiations towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace settlement, including a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees.

Finally, on the forthcoming occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestine People and on the occasion of the commemoration by the Palestinian people of the twentieth anniversary of their Declaration of Independence on 15 November, NAM takes this opportunity to reaffirm its unwavering support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause. NAM further reaffirms its long-standing principled positions calling, inter alia, for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab lands occupied since 1967, the realization by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, the establishment of their independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

VIII. SECRETARY-GENERAL ISSUES STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN GAZA AND SOUTHERN ISRAEL

The following statement was issued on 21 November 2008 by the Spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (SG/SM/11945, IHA/1270, PAL/2102):

The Secretary-General continues to express his concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza. He has underscored the importance of having Israel urgently permit

the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population of Gaza, and regrets that his calls have not yet been heeded. The Secretary-General has been briefed on the

humanitarian situation in Gaza by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, and supports the statement just released by his office.

The Secretary-General reiterates his condemnation of rocket and other attacks by

Palestinian militants against Israeli civilian targets. He calls for an end to such attacks and urges full respect by all parties for the calm that has been in effect since 19 June.

IX. SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The following is the text of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's statement on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, observed on 24 November 2008 (Press Release SG/SM/11950, OBV/750, PAL/2104). Special meetings in observance of the Solidarity Day were held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, as well as at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna.

It is a pleasure to join you for this annual observance. Every year on this day, we express our solidarity with the Palestinian people. For my part as Secretary-General, I underscore my commitment to doing my utmost in the search for a just, lasting, comprehensive, and urgent settlement of the question of the Palestinians.

The Palestinians have been deprived of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and statehood, for more than 60 years. Israelis live with an ever-present sense of insecurity. There is only one way to address such legitimate rights and fears: a peace agreement that results in an end of occupation, an end of conflict, and the creation of a State of Palestine living side by side in peace with the State of Israel.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders re-launched bilateral negotiations a year ago at Annapolis. They agreed to try to reach a

peace treaty by the end of 2008. I regret that this goal appears unlikely to be achieved.

However, the parties have succeeded in creating trust and a framework where none existed only two years ago. We must not diminish that achievement.

I commend the commitment made by President [Mahmoud] Abbas and Foreign Minister [Tzipi] Livni during the recent Quartet meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh earlier this month to continue talks into next year, and to seek a full and final settlement. The present negotiations have been promising and substantial. This must be an irreversible process, not open-ended. And it must resolve the permanent status issues of Jerusalem, settlements, borders, refugees, security and water.

My biggest concern in the immediate period ahead is the situation on the ground. In the West Bank, the determined efforts of the Palestinian Authority led by Prime

Minister [Salam] Fayyad have achieved progress in the security sector and institution-building. The cities of Hebron, Jenin and Nablus are safer places today than they were just a few months ago. I hope these efforts continue in a manner that ensures deepening respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Israel must do more to enable and empower these Palestinian efforts. I strongly call on Israel to adhere to its commitments under the road map, reaffirmed at Annapolis and again at Sharm el-Sheikh, to cease settlement activity, remove outposts and open Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem.

Israel must also refrain from unilateral actions in Jerusalem, such as demolitions and evictions, which undermine trust or alter the status quo. I recognize Israel's security concerns. But the improved environment of security cooperation must lead to an easing of closure in the West Bank in order to increase stability and to bring about a much-needed boost to the Palestinian economy.

The situation in the Gaza Strip remains of major concern. I call for immediate measures to ease the near-blanket closure of Gaza, which leads to worrying deprivations of basic supplies and human dignity. And I unreservedly condemn rocket fire.

The way forward is for all parties to respect the calm brokered by Egypt, and to reach out to the civilian population of the Gaza Strip instead of wrongly punishing them. I call on Israel to allow sufficient and predictable supplies to reach the population, to ensure access for humanitarian workers, and to facilitate stalled United Nations projects.

I also reiterate my profound concern at the ever-deepening Palestinian divide. I call on Hamas and, indeed, all Palestinian factions to work urgently to reunify the Gaza Strip and the West Bank within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority. This should be done in a manner that allows the peace process to move forward. At this crucial time in their quest for freedom and statehood, the people of Palestine deserve their leaders to put nation above faction, and the pursuit of peace above all other considerations.

I commend the efforts of the international community, including leaders in the region, who are working hard to support the parties. At this time of uncertainty and change, the role of the international community is vital.

I will be urging the new administration of the United States to be actively engaged in this process from the outset, as a matter of utmost priority.

I will also press the Quartet to assume the full measure of its responsibilities, and to continue showing a firm political commitment. Quartet members are actively considering having another meeting before the end of this year.

I will continue to advocate more attention to the Arab Peace Initiative.

I continue to urge donors to be generous, and fulfil the pledges made at the Paris Donors' Conference in support of the Palestinian Authority.

Above all, I will ensure that the United Nations plays its full role in the quest for peace, even as it continues to provide

assistance in the humanitarian, economic and social areas.

We have seen many difficulties in the past year. But it has been a crucial time in setting the stage for peace. Two thousand

nine must be the year that these preparations bear fruit. Let us all work constructively, tirelessly and consistently to help the parties make this happen. The Palestinian people need and deserve no less.

X. UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL

On 25 November 2008, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynne Pascoe briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (S/PV.6022). The following are excerpts of the briefing:

...

Two weeks ago, on 9 November, the Secretary-General chaired a meeting of the Quartet in Sharm el-Sheikh, in which the parties, at their initiative, briefed on the progress in their bilateral negotiations. That was a landmark meeting, the first time that the parties had jointly met with the Quartet, and an important marker of the ongoing political process pursuant to last year's Annapolis conference.

...

We regret that Israel and the Palestinians will likely fall short of their commitment made at Annapolis to reach an agreement by the end of the year. However, the parties' affirmation that they have engaged in direct, sustained and intensive negotiations is welcome. The parties' joint assessment that, without minimizing the remaining gaps and obstacles, their negotiations are substantial and promising is also noteworthy. The parties stated that negotiations would continue uninterrupted and that their goal remains a comprehensive

peace agreement addressing all issues, without exception. Further, the parties recommitted to the implementation of their road map commitments, on which more urgent action is vital to ensure the credibility of the process.

Palestinians remain divided. Further to an Egyptian proposal to Palestinian factions concerning reconciliation, Egypt invited them to a meeting on 9 November in Cairo. However, Hamas did not attend. The Secretary-General calls on Hamas and, indeed, on all Palestinian factions to work urgently to reunify the Gaza Strip and the West Bank within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority, in a manner that allows the peace process to move forward.

However, rhetoric between Hamas and Fatah has intensified. The Central Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) announced its election of Mahmoud Abbas as President of the State of Palestine, but the Hamas leadership has

rejected that move. Foreign ministers of the League of Arab States will meet in Cairo on 26 November to discuss the situation in Gaza, the internal Palestinian situation and the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Unfortunately, recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel underscore the fact that the gap between the political tracks and the situation on the ground remains large, posing considerable obstacles to the path that lies ahead. Israeli-Palestinian violence during the reporting period resulted in the deaths of 16 Palestinians - 15 militants in Gaza and one armed civilian in the West Bank - while injuring 122 others, mainly civilians. One Israeli was killed in a stabbing attack in Jerusalem on 23 October, and 25 Israeli soldiers and civilians were injured during the reporting period.

...

The *tahdiya* - or period of calm - in Gaza and southern Israel, in effect since 19 June, has been threatened by a number of violent incidents. Israel conducted a military incursion into Gaza on 4 November for the purpose of destroying a tunnel that was alleged to have been used to abduct Israeli soldiers. Six militants were killed, and Israel conducted a number of limited smaller incursions into Gaza over the following days. More than 123 rockets and 118 mortars were fired by Palestinian militants into Israel or at the crossings for people and goods between Israel and Gaza, injuring one Israeli civilian. The Secretary-General has repeatedly condemned rocket and other attacks by Palestinian militants on Israeli civilian targets, and I reiterate his condemnation here. We urge an end to rocket fire and call upon the parties to fully respect the calm.

Between 4 and 23 November, the Israeli authorities severely restricted the access of humanitarian workers as well as of commercial and humanitarian goods to Gaza. Those restrictions caused suspensions of food aid from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the World Food Programme, which have affected hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

Owing to shortages of fuel, the Gaza power plant shut down for more than 12 days, and rolling blackouts of up to 8 hours a day in some areas of the Gaza Strip were reported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs during the reporting period. Fuel availability was also significantly reduced in the open market, as the import of petrol, diesel and cooking gas had been blocked since 5 November. There is a severe shortage of cooking gas in the Gaza Strip affecting homes, and now 30 bakeries out of a total of 71 are not operational. Lack of fuel is also one of the principal factors leading to water rationing throughout the Strip, affecting approximately 600,000 people. Despite the closure, approximately 23 medical cases were allowed through the Erez crossing on a daily basis.

Rocket fire decreased dramatically on 23 November, and on 24 November Israel reopened the Kerem Shalom crossing, allowing 28 trucks carrying basic humanitarian supplies to enter, and also facilitated the delivery of some 440,000 litres of industrial fuel to Gaza's power plant, as well as the delivery of 240 tons of wheat and 560 tons of animal feed through the conveyer belt at Karni. According to the Government of Israel, rockets were fired from Gaza towards Ashkelon yesterday evening. Defence Minister Barak ordered all

crossings closed again today. Despite the fuel deliveries, the Gaza power plant is still not working, because of a technical malfunction and a lack of spare parts. Appeals have been made to Israel to allow such parts into Gaza.

Major news agencies and organizations have protested to the Israeli Government that foreign and Israeli media have not been allowed entry for more than 14 days.

The Secretary-General spoke with Prime Minister Olmert on 18 November and with Foreign Minister Livni on 20 November to express his deep concern over the consequences of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. The Secretary-General restated his condemnation of rocket fire, but stressed that Israel must uphold humanitarian principles. In public statements on 14 and 21 November, he strongly urged Israel to facilitate the freer movement of urgently needed humanitarian supplies and of concerned United Nations personnel into Gaza, and emphasized that measures that increase the hardship and suffering of the civilian population of the Gaza Strip as a whole are unacceptable and should cease immediately. The Secretary-General is pleased that some humanitarian supplies and some fuel have been allowed into Gaza and expects Israel to resume facilitating regular deliveries of both. In that context, we note the resumption of the Egyptian-brokered calm and hope that it continues.

We continue to call for the release of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit. No progress has been reported in the efforts to secure his release and that of a number of the more than 10,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israel.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has still not been granted access to Shalit 27 months into his captivity.

In the absence of Palestinian reconciliation, approximately half of all teachers and a quarter of all health workers are still on strike in Gaza, and both strikes have been extended until the end of the year. According to the World Health Organization, as a result of both internal disputes and restrictions on imports into Gaza, 95 essential drugs and 174 medical supplies are out of stock.

We are concerned about reports of human rights abuses committed in Gaza under the de facto Hamas regime, which has also apparently strengthened its control, divorcing Gaza's institutions from those of the Palestinian Authority.

In the West Bank, Palestinian security forces continue to make progress in implementing phase I road map obligations by extending security operations in areas under Palestinian Authority control. On 25 October, the Palestinian Authority deployed 550 new security personnel in Hebron. A further security operation in Bethlehem commenced on 24 November and is expected to run through the Christmas holiday period.

The forces deployed in Hebron have taken measures to enforce law and order and to seize illegal weapons and explosives.

It should be noted that, despite the Palestinian Authority's security efforts in the West Bank, there has not been a significant reduction in incursions by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) or in the easing of closures in the West Bank. There were

approximately 400 search campaigns during the reporting period. The number of obstacles to Palestinian movement in the West Bank stands at 630.

On 29 October, following a six-month suspension in demolitions based upon commitments made to Quartet Representative Tony Blair, Israeli authorities resumed the demolition of houses and structures lacking building permits in area C of the West Bank. Forty-seven structures were demolished in area C and approximately 150 Palestinians have been displaced or otherwise affected. A further eight house demolitions were reported in East Jerusalem, displacing or otherwise affecting approximately 50 people, including a man and his wife who were evicted from their home in which they had been living since 1956. The man, who had been hospitalized due to diabetes and other health problems, died on 23 November. We urge the cessation of house demolitions in the West Bank in accordance with the moratorium, and that no unilateral actions be taken in Jerusalem that undermine confidence or alter the status quo in the city.

In that context, it is deeply regrettable that settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is ongoing in the vast majority of settlements. More positively, we note that, on 2 November, the Government of Israel announced its intention to immediately cease all funding for illegal outposts in the West Bank. An attempt to dismantle an outpost near Hebron on 26 October was met with violence by settlers that injured eight members of the Israeli security forces and seven Palestinians, including a 95-year-old woman. Settlers clashed with the IDF and

Palestinians following the issuance of Supreme Court orders to vacate a building in Hebron. In total, there were 30 attacks by settlers on Palestinians during this reporting period. Those attacks have been condemned by senior Israeli officials.

The construction of the barrier within Occupied Palestinian Territory in deviation from the Green Line continues, contrary to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Also contrary to Israel's phase I road map obligation, Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem remain closed by Israeli military order.

On 22 and 23 November, the Palestinian Investment Conference - Northern Forum took place in Nablus, attracting over 250 international participants, including a number from Arab countries, with the aim of promoting the Northern West Bank as a region for investment.

The Palestinian Authority continues to strengthen its fiscal management and completed the payment of all its wage and private sector arrears during the reporting period. The budget and planning process for 2009 is fully on track. The Ministry of Finance has reported that by mid-November approximately \$1.6 billion in direct budget support had been transferred. However, there is an urgent need to increase budget support pledges for 2009 and to support the Authority through the delivery of planned, regular commitments as soon as possible.

Quartet Representative Tony Blair visited the region twice during this reporting period and continued his efforts to bring about the implementation of measures

agreed to with the Government of Israel in May 2008, with the goal of improving the situation on the ground and achieving a better economic environment and increased movement and access.

Special Coordinator Robert Serry held meetings with Syrian Government officials in Damascus on 24 November to discuss regional developments and express support for the continuation of the indirect Israel-Syrian talks. The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan remained quiet, but Israeli settlement activity continues.

During the reporting period, the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative was widely discussed as a vital platform for reaching the goal of a comprehensive regional peace. We commend the initiative and efforts of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, which led to the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled “Culture of Peace” here in New York on 13 November.

...

As the past month has demonstrated, the political process is still under way, but developments on the ground remain the biggest challenge to building lasting peace. There is a need for tangible improvements in the living conditions and security of civilians to give them faith in the political process. In order to make progress in the negotiations and improve the situation on the ground, it is important that the Quartet continues to push the process forward in this time of transition. In addition, the Secretary-General has urged United States President-elect Obama to engage early in the Middle East.

Our shared goal remains clear: an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the achievement of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. We will continue to work for that goal through comprehensive regional peace in the Middle East and the implementation of all the relevant Security Council resolutions.

XI. GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS FOUR RESOLUTIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

The General Assembly considered agenda item 16 of its sixty-third session entitled “Question of Palestine” at three plenary meetings, held on 24, 25 and 26 November 2008. For the verbatim record of those meetings, see A/63/PV.57, 58 and 60.

The General Assembly had before it the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/368-S/2008/612) and draft resolutions A/63/L.32 and Add.1, A/63/L.33 and Add.1, A/63/L.34 and Add.1, and A/63/L.35 and Add.1 and the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that were introduced by its Chairman. The four draft resolutions were adopted on 26 November 2008 as resolutions 63/26, 63/27, 63/28 and 63/29. The resolutions are reproduced below with the indication of the vote:

63/26.
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 62/80 of 10 December 2007,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,² endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,

^{1/} *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/63/35).*

^{2/} S/2003/529, annex.

Recalling further the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy.

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to

^{3/} A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

^{4/} See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*60th plenary meeting
Adopted by a vote of 107 to 8,
with 57 abstentions.*

63/27.

Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Taking note in particular of the relevant information contained in chapter V.B of that report,

Recalling its resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977 and all subsequent relevant

^{1/} *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/63/35).*

resolutions, including resolution 62/81 of 10 December 2007,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with its resolution 62/81;

2. *Considers* that, by assisting the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the implementation of its mandate, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to make a useful and constructive contribution to raising international awareness of the question of Palestine and generating international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to carry out its programme of work as detailed in relevant earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance, including, in particular, the monitoring of developments relevant to the question of Palestine, the organization of international meetings and conferences in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, liaison and cooperation with civil society, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, and the conduct of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority;

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued cooperation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

5. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Division in the performance of its tasks;

6. *Requests* the Division, as part of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, to continue to organize, under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights or a cultural event in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, and encourages Member States to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the Day of Solidarity.

*60th plenary meeting
Adopted by a vote of 106 to 8,
with 57 abstentions.*

63/28.

Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

^{1/} *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/63/35).*

Taking note in particular of the information contained in chapter VI of that report,

Recalling its resolution 62/82 of 10 December 2007,

Convinced that the worldwide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of civil society organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,²

Recalling further the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences*

^{2/} S/2003/529, annex.

^{3/} A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

Expressing the hope that the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in its upcoming programme for 2009–2010, will continue to examine ways to foster and encourage the contribution of media in support of the peace process between the Palestinian and Israeli sides,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by the Department of Public Information in compliance with resolution 62/82;

2. *Considers* that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department is very useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East and that the programme is contributing effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process;

3. *Requests* the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the

^{4/} See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 2009–2010, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine and the peace process, including reports on the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organizations, as well as on the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy vis-à-vis the peace process;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine in all fields, including materials concerning the relevant recent developments in that regard, in particular the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine;

(c) To expand its collection of audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, to continue the production and preservation of such material and to update, on a periodic basis, the public exhibit on the question of Palestine displayed in the General Assembly building;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel;

(e) To organize international, regional and national seminars or encounters for journalists, aiming in particular at sensitizing public opinion to the question of Palestine and the peace process and at

enhancing dialogue and understanding between Palestinians and Israelis for the promotion of a peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;

(f) To continue to provide assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development, in particular to strengthen the annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists;

4. *Encourages* the Department to formulate ways for the media and representatives of civil society to engage in an open and positive discussion on means for encouraging people-to-people dialogue and promoting peace and mutual understanding in the region.

*60th plenary meeting
Adopted by a vote of 162 to 8,
with 4 abstentions.*

63/29.

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003 and 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been more than sixty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and forty-one years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 62/83 of 10 December 2007,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the

^{1/} A/63/368-S/2008/612.

^{2/} See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Reaffirming also the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called E-1 plan and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and the territory as a whole,

Reaffirming further that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israel policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian personnel and goods, via the imposition of crossing closures as well as the continued establishment of checkpoints and the imposition of a permit regime

throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian people, which remains that of a dire humanitarian crisis, as well as on efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, and on the contiguity of the Territory,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for its implementation and compliance with its provisions,

Recalling further the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁵

Recalling the convening of the international conference held at Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007, in particular the decision by the parties to launch meaningful, direct negotiations towards the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately the

^{3/} See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

^{4/} S/2003/529, annex.

^{5/} A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including in the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming the reconvening of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, at United Nations Headquarters on 22 September 2008, and affirming the importance of continued follow-up and fulfilment of pledges made at the Paris donors' conference of 17 December 2007 to mobilize donors to provide financial support to the Palestinian Authority to enable it to build a prosperous and viable Palestinian State and, in the meantime, to also provide assistance to alleviate the socio-economic and humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, and acknowledging the contribution of the Palestinian-European Mechanism for the Management of Socio-Economic Aid of the European Commission in this regard,

Welcoming also the convening of the Bethlehem Conference on Private-Sector Investment from 21 to 23 May 2008, aimed at promoting an enabling environment for Palestinian private-sector growth and development,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, and

emphasizing the need to preserve the Palestinian institutions and infrastructure,

Welcoming the outcome of the Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law, held on 24 June 2008, and calling for its speedy implementation,

Welcoming also the progress observed in Jenin, and calling upon the parties to continue cooperation benefiting both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular for promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to other major population centres,

Expressing its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians and the serious deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing its grave concern over continuing military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Taking note of the calm prevailing between the Gaza Strip and southern Israel since June 2008, and calling for its continued respect by both sides,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides,

Expressing concern over the unlawful takeover of Palestinian Authority institutions in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, and calling for the restoration of the situation to that which existed prior to June 2007 and for the continuation of serious efforts for the resumption of dialogue and the restoration of Palestinian national unity,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations between the parties for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Taking note of the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security,

to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁶

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet and of the League of Arab States;

3. *Further reaffirms* the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁵ and encourages continued serious efforts to follow up and promote the Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

4. *Reaffirms* the importance of the international conference convened at Annapolis, and urges the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet

and the international community, immediate and concrete steps in follow-up to their joint understanding, including through active and serious resumed bilateral negotiations;

5. *Calls upon* both parties to fulfil their obligations in respect of the implementation of the road map⁴ by taking immediate parallel and reciprocal steps in this regard;

6. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000;

7. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners;

8. *Stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres, inter alia, by easing movement and access, including by the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to movement, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

9. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

10. *Notes* the Israeli withdrawal in 2005 from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a

^{6/} See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 36.

step towards the implementation of the road map, and the need for the parties to resolve all remaining issues in the Gaza Strip;

11. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, in specific, to allow for the opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access as well as for commercial flows, which are essential for improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and ensuring the viability of the Palestinian economy;

12. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

13. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion² and as demanded in resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15 and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

14. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

15. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

16. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

17. *Also stresses* the need for justly resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

18. *Calls upon* the parties to accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative;

19. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the

humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the rebuilding, restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

20. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the continuing efforts of the Quartet's Special Representative, Tony Blair, to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize international donor support;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*60th plenary meeting
Adopted by a vote of 164 to 7,
with 3 abstentions.*

XII. GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS TWO RESOLUTIONS ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

On 25 and 26 November 2008, the General Assembly considered, under agenda item 15 of its sixty-third session, two draft resolutions on the situation in the Middle East (A/63/L.36 and Add.1 and A/63/L.37 and Add.1), which were adopted on 26 November 2008 as resolutions 63/30 on Jerusalem and 63/31 on the Syrian Golan. For the verbatim record of the meeting, see A/63/PV.59 and 60. The resolution on Jerusalem is reproduced below with the indication of the vote:

63/30. Jerusalem

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, in particular its provisions regarding the City of Jerusalem,

Recalling also its resolution 36/120 E of 10 December 1981 and all subsequent resolutions, including resolution 56/31 of 3 December 2001, in which it, inter alia, determined that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have

altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, were null and void and must be rescinded forthwith,

Recalling further the Security Council resolutions relevant to Jerusalem, including resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, in which the Council, inter alia, decided not to recognize the "Basic Law" on Jerusalem,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the*

*Occupied Palestinian Territory,*¹ and recalling resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004,

Expressing its grave concern about any action taken by any body, governmental or non-governmental, in violation of the above-mentioned resolutions,

Expressing its grave concern in particular about the continuation by Israel, the occupying Power, of illegal settlement activities, including the so-called E-1 plan, its construction of the wall in and around East Jerusalem, its restrictions on access to and residence in East Jerusalem, and the further isolation of the city from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is having a detrimental effect on the lives of Palestinians and could prejudice a final status agreement on Jerusalem,

Reaffirming that the international community, through the United Nations, has a legitimate interest in the question of the City of Jerusalem and the protection of the unique spiritual, religious and cultural dimensions of the city, as foreseen in relevant United Nations resolutions on this matter,

^{1/} See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General,²

1. *Reiterates its determination* that any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever, and calls upon Israel to cease all such illegal and unilateral measures;

2. *Stresses* that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the City of Jerusalem should take into account the legitimate concerns of both the Palestinian and Israeli sides and should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the holy places by the people of all religions and nationalities;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*60th plenary meeting
Adopted by a vote of 163 to 6,
with 6 abstentions.*

^{2/} A/63/361.