



## DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

**October 2010**  
**Volume XXXIII, Bulletin No. 10**

### Bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine

#### *Contents*

	<i>Page</i>
I. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People adopts annual report to General Assembly	1
II. Secretary-General sends message to Arab League Summit	5
III. United Nations Development Programme launches project for Palestinian Women NGOs	6
IV. Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefs Security Council	7
V. United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process issues statement on new settlement construction	11
VI. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopts decisions on its work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory	11
VII. Chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group in New York transmits Dushanbe Declaration	12

*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System  
on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:*  
<http://unispal.un.org>

## **I. COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ADOPTS ANNUAL REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*At its meeting on 1 October 2010, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People adopted its annual report to the General Assembly. The conclusions and recommendations contained in the report are reproduced below (A/65/35):*

Throughout the reporting period, the Committee has continued to advocate a peaceful and just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, through the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. There is international consensus that such a solution would lead to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as defined by the General Assembly, and the establishment of peace and security in the region. The Committee has reiterated that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land that started in 1967 remains the main obstacle towards the realization of that objective. The occupation has entailed the construction of settlements and the wall, the transfer of Israeli settlers and the annexation of Palestinian land, as well as the military oppression of the Palestinian civilian population, constituting violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and constant affronts to the human dignity of the Palestinian people and the economic and social fabric of the Palestinian society. The occupation, with all its consequences, not only subjugates the Palestinian people but also harms the social fabric of the Israeli society. The prolonged occupation has made the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution more difficult by creating almost irreversible facts on the ground. As a result, a majority of the Palestinian people have lost confidence in the political process with Israel.

The Committee has repeatedly expressed its utmost concern about the volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, and the stagnation of the political process. The Committee remained firmly opposed to the continued illegal construction of settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, accompanied by escalating settler violence. In addition, the construction of the separation wall has continued, leaving thousands of Palestinians cut off from access to their lands, families, schools and hospitals and isolating several communities in walled enclaves. The Committee is disturbed by the impunity with which Israel's legal obligations, as confirmed by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, have been flouted, and calls upon the international community to take the required action to ensure respect for, and compliance with, the ruling of the International Court of Justice, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Committee has been particularly alarmed by the situation in Occupied East Jerusalem, including the acceleration of settlement construction and expansion, the demolition of houses, the revocation of residency rights, the eviction of Palestinian citizens, settler extremism and the threats to Jerusalem's holy sites and historical heritage. Recent Israeli policy statements and actions by the municipal government in the City are not conducive to productive talks on the future of Jerusalem as the capital of two States. The Committee reiterates its position that Israel's dangerous and provocative policies in East Jerusalem are prone to spark

negative reactions on the ground, in the region and by Muslims worldwide, leading to violence and even armed conflict. East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and a negotiated solution of the question of Jerusalem, based on international law, is essential to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and crucial for a durable peace in the whole region. The Committee is encouraged that these concerns are widely shared by Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations, as well as by parliamentarians.

The Committee has persistently condemned the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, which prevents any reconstruction and sustained humanitarian assistance and which has caused the near collapse of the economy and social fabric of Gaza. That siege constitutes a severe form of collective punishment of the entire population of the Gaza Strip. The Committee has also denounced the firing of rockets and mortar rounds by Palestinian militants from Gaza and reiterated its call for the release of Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit. It urges Israel to open all of the Gaza Strip's border crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, import and export of commercial goods, including reconstruction materials, and movement of persons in accordance with international humanitarian law, the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005 and Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

The Committee continued to monitor the international investigations and their follow-up into the Israeli military offensive against Gaza of December 2008 to January 2009 and the Free Gaza flotilla incident of May 2010. It acknowledged the value of internal investigations at the national level. The report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, established by the Human Rights Council and led by Justice Richard Goldstone

(A/HRC/12/48), represents a comprehensive, balanced and authoritative account of the 2008-2009 Israeli incursion into Gaza. While the Committee recognizes the value of the Israeli Government's recent examination of some of the specific allegations, it calls for a comprehensive, credible and independent investigation into the violations of international law committed and demands follow-up action. The Committee also took note of the report of the international fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, resulting from the Israeli attacks on the flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian assistance (A/HRC/15/21). The results of those investigations will, without doubt, contribute to a strengthening of the rule and application of international humanitarian and human rights law in conflict situations. The Committee appeals to all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their obligations in accordance with common Article 1, which obligates them to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances.

The Committee welcomed the resumption of the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on all permanent status issues and notes the important role played by the United States, Egypt and Jordan. The agreement by the Palestinian leadership to direct talks, despite Israel's lack of compliance with its road map obligations, testifies to the full commitment of the Palestine Liberation Organization to a peaceful solution of the conflict and should be met by a genuine commitment of the Government of Israel to the two-State solution, bolstered by tangible improvements of the situation on the ground. The Committee is of the view that the talks can only succeed if they are conducted in an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. In that

regard, the Committee joins the rest of the international community in expressing deep regret at the non-extension of the Israeli moratorium on settlement construction, which called into question the continuation of the negotiations. It is crucial that the negotiations are based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. The direct involvement in the negotiations of regional partners is vitally important. The continued support by the international community, in particular by the Quartet and its individual members, is key to moving forward the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on all permanent status issues. The Committee will closely follow the developments and offer constructive support in the interest of resolving the question of Palestine and the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

The negotiations should be buttressed by a parallel process of Palestinian State-building in implementation of the strategic plan of the Palestinian Authority. The Committee will back those efforts by advocating sustained and generous donor commitment, highlighting the actual needs on the ground and providing the Palestinian Authority with the opportunity to present its assessment to the wider international community.

The Committee remains concerned that the divisions among the Palestinian factions profoundly affect the legitimate Palestinian national aspirations for statehood and peace. It calls for invigorated efforts by all to help reconcile their positions on the basis of the prevailing consensus on the need to achieve the two-State solution, which would lead to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate

heightened international awareness of the current challenges for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. In that connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the continued involvement of parliamentarians and civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) the increased international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine as indicated by the growing number of documents and relevant information materials on the issue accessed by users worldwide at the websites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, enhanced.

The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2011, implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the permanent status negotiations and on contributing to the creation of a favourable international atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in

particular the halt of all settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It will support global campaigns to challenge Israeli impunity and promote the concept of Israeli accountability for its actions towards the Palestinian people. It will pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, such as the Palestine refugees, the Palestinians living in Gaza and Palestinian political prisoners. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for the Palestinian institution-building plan and all other efforts to facilitate the independence and viability of the Palestinian State. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution of the conflict. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue to have the narratives heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and their organizations in this process.

The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with

civil society entities and consult them on ways to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.

The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.

The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the “Question of Palestine” portal and to explore new technologies and media, including Web-based social information networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. The Division should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection. The Division should further develop the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority paying special attention to the programme’s gender balance, and organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee

calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.

## **II. SECRETARY-GENERAL SENDS MESSAGE TO ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT**

*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon sent the following message to the extraordinary session of the League of Arab States, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 9 October 2010, which was delivered by United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry (SG/SM/13170):*

I send my greetings to the Arab leaders gathered in Sirte, and I thank Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi for hosting this important Summit. I wish you well in your discussion of the many challenges facing the Arab world today.

The question of Palestine is foremost in all our minds.

When President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu met on 2 September in Washington, D.C., they resolved to seek an historic Israeli-Palestinian agreement on all permanent status issues within a year. President Obama signalled his strong personal engagement, as did leaders in the region. The Quartet gave full support to this effort and is committed to convening an international conference in Moscow at the appropriate time, concurrent with direct negotiations.

The continuation and expansion of settlement building in the West Bank is contrary to international law and the Road Map. Moreover, the expiry of Israel's 10-month partial settlement moratorium, without anything in place to preserve an atmosphere for successful negotiations, has created a major obstacle to progress. I have publicly expressed my disappointment at this development.

My Quartet colleagues have authorized me to confirm that we adhere to our statement of 21 September. In that statement, we noted that mutual trust and confidence are critical to successful negotiations, and reiterated our call on Israel and the Palestinians to promote an environment conducive to progress, including by refraining from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric. We noted that the commendable Israeli settlement moratorium instituted last November had a positive impact and urged its continuation, and we adhere to that position. We also recalled that unilateral actions by either party, including settlement activity, cannot prejudge the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community. We called upon both sides to fulfill their obligations under the Road Map, encouraged the parties to work together to find a way to ensure that negotiations continue in a constructive manner, and urged the international community to support their efforts.

In that spirit, I urge you to signal your strong support for President Abbas at this difficult time. He is demonstrating his commitment to legitimate Palestinian rights and to meeting the challenges of negotiating a just and lasting peace. I also encourage you to support his efforts and those of Prime

Minister Fayyad to build the institutions of a future State. This work is making unprecedented progress and needs your political and financial support.

For my part, I will continue to support Palestinian reconciliation within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority, and I ask you all to do the same. We must also reaffirm our readiness to work together not just for Israeli-Palestinian peace, but for Israeli-Syrian peace, Israeli-Lebanese peace, and the comprehensive regional peace envisaged in Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The situation in Gaza remains among my top priorities. The United Nations is at the forefront of efforts to assist the people

and to press Israel to enable reconstruction and economic revival. At long last, we are making some progress. But the needs are huge and much more needs to be done, including exports, freer movement of people, and broader reconstruction. As we work on this agenda, support from the Arab world is highly appreciated.

Above all, this is a time for statesmanship and wisdom. If the door to peace closes, it will be very hard to reopen. There is no alternative to a negotiated settlement resulting in the creation of an independent and viable State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. Let us reaffirm our common commitment to that goal, and work together to achieve it in the year ahead.

### **III. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME LAUNCHES PROJECT FOR PALESTINIAN WOMEN NGOS**

*On 17 October 2010, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People signed an agreement with four women non-governmental organizations in the Gaza Strip to implement a \$350,000 project funded by the Government of Canada, as a result of a UNDP social assessment survey conducted in partnership with Gaza civil society organizations to identify post-conflict needs of different groups following the Israeli attacks on Gaza in December 2008-January 2009. The following are excerpts from the press release on the event:*

...

The project aims at supporting the resilience of disadvantaged women and their families in the Gaza Strip through carrying out interventions in partnership with civil society organizations specialized in planning and implementing socio-economic, education, awareness and recreational women-based programmes.

The project consists of providing training in income generation schemes to women's households and supporting them to access local markets, providing advocacy

and capacity-building schemes for women's organizations to enhance their operational and outreach capacities in raising society's awareness of vital concepts, including gender equality, violence against women and women's political, social, and economic empowerment; training young male and female researchers on topics related to gender equality and human rights and finally organizing a wide range of recreational activities for women beneficiaries and their families, including cultural, sports and arts events.

...



#### **IV. ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL**

*On 18 October 2010, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco briefed the Security Council on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The following are excerpts from the briefing (S/PV/6404):*

Six weeks after direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations began in Washington, D.C., we are at an impasse. The parties have not met since 15 September.

On 26 September, despite calls for its continuation from the Middle East Quartet, Israel’s partial settlement moratorium in the West Bank expired and was not renewed. Construction that had been frozen resumed in some settlements. President Abbas indicated that he would not continue negotiations unless Israel froze settlement activity.

The Secretary-General has publicly expressed his disappointment that the moratorium was not renewed and reaffirmed that settlement activity is illegal under international law and contrary to the Road Map. He has been in direct and frequent contact with regional leaders, including President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu, and has urged all to find a way forward.

On 21 September, the Quartet met in New York, noted the positive impact of the settlement restraint and urged its continuation. The Quartet reiterated that unilateral actions by either party, including settlement activity, would not be recognized by the international community. It encouraged the parties to work together to find a way to ensure that negotiations continued in a constructive manner to resolve all final status issues within one year.

Following consultations with Quartet partners, this position was reiterated in a message that Special Coordinator Serry

delivered on behalf of the Secretary-General to the Arab League Summit in Sirte, Libya, on 9 October. In Sirte, the League of Arab States Follow-up Committee of the Arab Peace Initiative supported President Abbas’s position not to continue in negotiations unless Israel freezes settlement activity and agreed to reconvene in a month to assess the situation.

The Quartet envoys have been in regular contact and principals are discussing a proposal to meet soon to review developments. We have a brief and crucial window to overcome the current impasse. Intensive diplomatic efforts, led by the United States and supported by all members of the Quartet, are ongoing to create conditions conducive to the continuation of negotiations. These efforts were made even more difficult by the Israeli Government’s approval on 14 October of construction tenders for 238 housing units in the settlements of Ramot and Pisgat Ze’ev in East Jerusalem, contrary to international law and running directly counter to the Quartet’s efforts.

Time is of the essence, and we need progress in the coming weeks. The Secretary-General continues to believe that, if the door to peace closes, it will be very hard to reopen it. There is no alternative to a negotiated settlement resulting in the creation of an independent and viable State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security.

Despite these uncertainties, the State-building agenda of the Palestinian Authority continues to advance. On 21 September, the

Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) met in New York. The Committee members recognized that the Palestinian Authority's reform agenda had accelerated in 2010, with critical achievements in public finance reform, infrastructure and the provision of social services. They supported Prime Minister Fayyad's determination to implement the Homestretch to Freedom agenda by August next year. The AHLC welcomed Israeli measures to remove some obstacles to movement in the West Bank and to ease restrictions on some imports to Gaza, while urging further steps, particularly in support of greater private sector-led growth.

As a symbol of continued support for private-sector development, which will ultimately drive the sustainable economic growth that is critical to the future State, on 11 October Prime Minister Fayyad broke ground on the agro-industrial park in the Jordan Valley funded by Japan. The park could create 10,000 Palestinian jobs and provide a major boost to the economy. However, as with other infrastructure in Area C, this park will require the Government of Israel to approve the necessary permits.

While in New York, Prime Minister Fayyad briefed AHLC members, as well as Arab League foreign ministers, that commitments of donor funding for 2010 remained critically below what is necessary to ensure that the Palestinian Authority can meet expenses. Reforms have steadily lowered the budget deficit, reducing the Authority's reliance on donor funding for budget support. However, despite the continuing generosity of some donors, commitments for 2010 remain insufficient to ensure that the Palestinian Authority can meet expenses in both Gaza and the West Bank, and the Palestinian Authority faces increasing difficulties in borrowing from domestic banks to cover this shortfall.

There continue to be tensions and violent incidents in the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority is working to provide security in areas under its authority and to meet its Road Map commitments to combat terrorist attacks — and reportedly thwarted attempts by militants to launch attacks during the reporting period, underscoring the continuing security challenges on the ground. A sixth battalion of Palestinian national security forces is currently training in Jordan, with international assistance, before being deployed in the West Bank.

Despite Palestinian efforts, Israeli security forces, citing security concerns, conducted 353 operations in the West Bank during the reporting period, in which six Palestinians were killed, including two leaders of the Hamas Izz el-Deen al-Qassam Brigades allegedly involved in the killing of four Israelis near Hebron on 31 August. Also, 157 Palestinians were injured and 330 arrested. Incursions on this scale weaken efforts to build genuine security cooperation. One Palestinian labourer was killed while trying to reach East Jerusalem through the barrier, and another suffered a fatal heart attack.

A total of 44 violent incidents were recorded between local Palestinians and settlers, in which six Palestinians and four Israelis were injured. One Palestinian was shot by a settler on 8 October, and there were two incidents of Palestinians being run over. In a deplorable act of desecration, there was an arson attack by settlers on a mosque near Bethlehem on 4 October. To defuse tension and promote inter-faith tolerance, six rabbis subsequently visited the mosque and donated new Korans to replace those damaged in the blaze. There were also attacks by Palestinians on settlers, including on 26 September, when Palestinians opened fire at an Israeli vehicle near Hebron, injuring a man and his pregnant wife.

Hundreds of olive trees are reported to have been set on fire, poisoned or uprooted by settlers throughout the West Bank in the run-up to the harvest season. Prime Minister Fayyad marked the beginning of the olive harvest on 10 October by participating in olive-picking in the northern West Bank village of Iraq Burin, which has been the scene of repeated attacks by settlers in past months. Much more needs to be done by Israel to prevent violence by extremists against Palestinian civilians under occupation, and to impose the rule of law.

On 13 October, Israel demolished 10 outposts in the West Bank. This is a positive development, which we hope will be followed by further steps towards Israel's Road Map commitment to dismantling outposts erected since March 2001.

The wall, partly constructed in deviation from the Green Line and in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice continues to pose significant challenges to the movement of Palestinians in the West Bank. Despite efforts to ease restrictions on movement and access, the number of obstacles in the West Bank remained at 508. On 11 October, an organizer of the anti-wall campaign who advocates peaceful resistance was convicted of incitement and organization and participation in demonstrations, and was sentenced to one year in jail by an Israeli military tribunal.

There were renewed confrontations in sensitive areas of East Jerusalem during the reporting period, underscoring the tensions caused by the presence and expansion of settler communities in the heart of Palestinian neighbourhoods. On 22 September, a Palestinian was shot and killed by an Israeli private security guard in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan after he was allegedly attacked by Palestinians throwing stones at his car.

Violent clashes ensued and spread to other Palestinian neighbourhoods. On 26 September, an Israeli court rejected an appeal claiming ownership of a building by two Palestinian families in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, leaving a further 20 families living in the area at risk of eviction.

The status of the four Palestinian lawmakers from the Hamas-affiliated Change and Reform bloc remains unresolved. This unsustainable situation needs a sensible resolution that ensures that they are not expelled from Jerusalem.

The situation in Gaza remains a source of serious concern. The modest gains of recent months must not obscure the need for more far-reaching measures to ease the blockade, including enabling freer movement of people and exports and a wider range of goods on the commercial market as part of a broader effort to implement all aspects of resolution 1860 (2009).

If we are to make progress, all parties must work to ensure calm. During the reporting period, Palestinian militant groups fired seven rockets and six mortars from Gaza into Israel, while Israeli security forces conducted five air strikes and six incursions into Gaza. Three Palestinian militants and one civilian were killed, while 18 civilians and one militant were injured. We urge all parties to respect international humanitarian law and to halt violence.

During the reporting period, a total of 2,570 truckloads entered Gaza, with a weekly average of 857. Fifty-eight per cent of the imports were food products. In June, prior to the announcement of the new Israeli policy for Gaza, the weekly average was 566 trucks. However, the current imports still represent a third of the June 2007 pre-blockade weekly average. We reiterate that the appropriate way to meet needs in Gaza is

through the further opening of legitimate crossings.

I am pleased to report the completion of 151 housing units in Khan Younis, which on Friday, 15 October, began to receive their new inhabitants. Further approvals of United Nations projects have been received from the Government of Israel. While these are only a portion of the total package presented to Israel, they are nevertheless part of an expanding flow of United Nations recovery and construction work, which will begin to address Gaza's immense recovery and reconstruction needs. In that regard, the United Nations will present additional programmes of work before the end of the year and will continue to work with the Government of Israel to streamline implementation arrangements. One immediate step would be for Israel to expand the working hours and days for which the Karni crossing is open.

The de facto Hamas authorities closed down several civilian associations during the reporting period, including a journalists' syndicate and a farmers' union. Some civic groups, including partners in United Nations-implemented projects, have suspended their operations in Gaza, claiming to have experienced increasing pressure from the authorities. In addition, on 19 September, unknown assailants set ablaze a recreation water park in Gaza. We are also concerned that, on 22 September, a Palestinian man was sentenced to death by firing squad after a military tribunal convicted him of collaboration with enemy parties.

We reiterate our concern over the continued captivity of Staff Sergeant Shalit and call for his immediate release. Humanitarian access to him should be granted without further delay. We note reports of a resumption of efforts to conclude an agreement that would secure his

release in exchange for the release of a number of the more than 9,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

We continue to support efforts to advance Palestinian reconciliation based on commitments of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. These efforts have been stalled following Hamas's refusal to sign the Egyptian-brokered draft reconciliation proposal. Senior Fatah representatives met with Hamas leader Khaled Mashal in Damascus on 23 September. A further session of talks is expected on 20 October.

As mentioned at the last monthly briefing to the Council, the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 flotilla incident will discuss and review the interim reports once it had also received a report from Israel. The Israeli commission to examine the maritime incident of 31 May 2010 continues its proceedings, which are now at an advanced stage. We look forward to the continued cooperation of the parties with the Panel and to the Panel's further progress and substantive work.

It remains essential — and indeed urgent — that serious steps are taken to restore the regional tracks of the peace process, in particular between Israel and Syria. Only a comprehensive approach to peace will be sustainable and has the potential to ease tensions in the region. On the ground, the situation in the occupied Golan remained stable but settlement activities continued.

...

We must remain collectively committed to the goal of a peace agreement within a year from the start of talks in September. We must overcome the current impasse and — more important — ensure that when talks resume they move intensively and definitively to seek

resolutions of the key core issues, including borders. The Secretary-General will continue to work closely with the Quartet and regional and international partners — and the parties themselves — to support this agenda.

The United Nations remains committed to an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and to the goal of establishing an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.

## **V. UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS ISSUES STATEMENT ON NEW SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION**

*On 20 October 2010, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry issued the following statement:*

Reports detailing the commencement of hundreds of new Israeli settlement housing units in the occupied Palestinian territory since the 26 September expiry of Israel's moratorium are alarming. Renewed settlement construction, which is illegal under international law, runs contrary to the

international community's repeated appeals to the parties to create conditions conducive to negotiations, and will only further undermine trust. We continue to strongly support efforts to create conditions for the resumption of successful negotiations.

## **VI. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION ADOPTS DECISIONS ON ITS WORK IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY**

*On 21 October 2010, the 185th session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted five decisions concerning its work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as follows (UNESCOPR\_21102010):*

**The Ascent to the Mughrabi Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem.** The Board voted 31 to 5 (17 abstentions) to reaffirm the necessity of Israel's cooperation in order to arrange access to the Mughrabi Ascent site for Jordanian and Waqf experts and that no measures should be taken that will affect the authenticity and integrity of the site, in accordance with the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

**Jerusalem's cultural heritage.** The

Board voted 34 to 1 (19 abstentions) to reaffirm the religious significance of the Old City of Jerusalem for Muslims, Christians and Jews. The decision expresses deep concern over the ongoing Israeli excavations and archaeological works on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Old City of Jerusalem, which contradicts UNESCO decisions and conventions and United Nations and Security Council resolutions". It invites the Director-General to appoint experts to be stationed in East Jerusalem to report on all aspects covering the architectural, educational, cultural and demographical situation there. It also invites

the Israelis to facilitate the work of the experts in conformity with Israel's adherence to UNESCO decisions and conventions.

**The Palestinian sites of al-Haram al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of the Patriarchs in al-Khalil/Hebron and the Bilal bin Rabah Mosque/Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem.** The Board voted 44 to 1 (12 abstentions) to reaffirm that the two sites are an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territories and that any unilateral action by the Israeli authorities is to be considered a violation of international law, the UNESCO Conventions and the United Nations and Security Council resolutions.

**Educational and cultural institutions in the Occupied Arab territories.** The board voted 41 to 1 (15 abstentions) expressing its "continuing concern" about the harmful impact of the separation Wall and other practices on the activities of cultural and educational institutions, as well

as resulting obstacles that prevent Palestinian schoolchildren and students from being an integral part of their social fabric and from exercising their full right to education. The decision calls on the Director-General to continue efforts to preserve the human, social and cultural fabric of the occupied Syrian Golan, and to undertake efforts to offer appropriate curricula and provide more grants and adequate assistance to the education and cultural institutions of the occupied Syrian Golan.

**The reconstruction and development of Gaza.** The Board voted 41 to 1 (15 abstentions) on a decision that "deplores the continuous blockade of the Gaza Strip, which harmfully affects the free and sustained movement of personnel and humanitarian relief items". The decision called upon the Director-General to continue contributing to the United Nations humanitarian response in Gaza within the Organization's fields of competence.

## **VII. CHAIR OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE GROUP IN NEW YORK TRANSMITS DUSHANBE DECLARATION**

*On 28 October 2010, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations Sirodjidin Aslov, in his capacity as Chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group in New York, transmitted to the President of the Security Council the Dushanbe Declaration of the thirty-seventh session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in Dushanbe from 18 to 20 May 2010. The following are excerpts from the Declaration (A/65/545, S/2010/558):*

...

The situation in the Middle East will remain tense as long as Israel persists in its obstinate policies and in hindering peace efforts, and until a comprehensive and just settlement covering all aspects of the problem is reached. Therefore we call for an intensification of efforts by the international community, including by the Security Council, in line with its Charter

responsibilities, aimed at accelerating the process of achieving a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East. In this context, the Council strongly condemns all illegal measures and actions in Occupied East Jerusalem aimed at judaizing this city which has an Arab and Islamic character, including, in particular, the building of settlements that threaten to undermine any negotiation leading to an end to the Israeli occupation of 1967 and the

establishment of an independent, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, on all Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We commend the efforts made by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, and Bayt Mal Al-Quds in order to preserve the identity of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and support the

steadfastness of its people. We also condemn Israel's persisting occupation of the Syrian Golan and Lebanese territories, and we emphasize our support for these two countries in regaining all their territories occupied by Israel in 1967.

...

---