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Sixty-first General Assembly
Third Committee
38th & 39th Meetings (AM & PM)

RISE OF RACISM, INTOLERANCE IS SERIOUS THREAT TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

THIRD COMMITTEE TOLD

At Outset of Discussion on Racial Discrimination, Self-Determination
Speakers address Situation in Occupied Palestinian Territory, Use of Mercenaries

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Background

The Third Committee (Social, Cultural and Humanitarian) met today to begin its consideration of elimination of racism and racial discrimination and of the right of peoples to self-determination.

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Statements

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KHALID MOHAMMED OSMAN SIDAHMED MOHAMMED ALI (Sudan) ...

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... Sudan called upon the international community to pay more attention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to the oppression and assassinations that its people had been suffering under Israeli occupation. Full implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions would correspond with aspirations for an independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital.

HESHAM MOHAMED EMAN AFIFI (Egypt), ...

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... In addition, he said he looked forward to the day when the usurped rights of the Palestinian people would be restored, putting an end to the daily racial violations against that people.

GUO JIAKUN (China) ...

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The right to self-determination was a sacred right for people against foreign aggression and in safeguarding national sovereignty and dignity, he said. The international community should fully respect those principles and promote the right of peoples to self-determination. In that context, his delegation viewed the situation in the Middle East, particularly the humanitarian situation in Palestine, as cause for concern. China supported the struggle of the Palestinian people for

the right to self-determination and urged the international community to continue efforts to find a just and durable solution for the people of Palestine.

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Mr. OMDZAMANI ([Iran](#)) said several important and specific United Nations resolutions, as well as resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, had consistently reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Regrettably, Israel had not only defied that right, but had also perpetuated massive human rights abuses of the Palestinians. The recent Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip and Beit Hanoun and the extended use of massive force against Palestinian civilians were among the latest flagrant violations of those rights. General Assembly resolution A/Res/60/107 of 18 January 2006, expressed its grave concern about continuing and systematic human rights violations of the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, including the excessive use of force, collective punishment, reoccupation and closures, the confiscation of land, the establishment and expansion of settlements and the construction of the wall inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The newly established Human Rights Council, in its first special session, had adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, he said. It had expressed its grave concern at the breaches by Israel, the occupying Power, of international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the arbitrary arrest of Palestinian ministers. Despite the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the region was still besieged and cut off from the rest of the world. Grave human rights violations, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, originated from occupation and denial of the fundamental rights of Palestinian people, in particular the right to self-determination. He expected the United Nations, in particular the Human Rights Council, to take effective measures to end Israeli crimes and provide the Palestinian people with the protection they needed. The violation of the Israeli regime of the Palestinian right to self-determination had not only trampled the fundamental human rights of an entire people, but had also been a persistent threat to peace in the region. Systematically occupied by the Israeli regime, the Palestinian Territory must return to the people of Palestine.

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AMMAR HIJAZI, Observer of [Palestine](#), said that the Palestinian people's plight with racism had been going on for almost 100 years, when their land had been promised as another people's homeland without their consultation or consent. That plight had reached its peak in 1948, with the forced expulsion of then more than 800,000 Palestinians from their historical homeland. There now were four million such refugees. Inheriting refugee status had plunged Palestinians into a dark abyss of bitterness and hopelessness. Israel, the occupying Power, had adopted racial discrimination as doctrine, when dealing with the Palestinian people. It exerted all efforts to deny Palestinians the rights to which they were entitled, including the right to return to their homes.

Most recently, the Israeli Prime Minister had invited Israel's most racist politician to join the Government as his Deputy and his Minister of Strategic Affairs, he said. Avigdor Lieberman, head of the Israel Beituna Party, had, repeatedly and very openly, disclosed his racist views of Arabs and Palestinians. The Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, had been shackled by an Israeli military occupation, built on the racist premise that security and prosperity had to come through subjugation, exploitation and oppression of another nation and all its resources. The colonial wall that Israel had erected, in the West Bank, had translated into cold hard cement, the Israeli Government's racist ideology and deemed impossible the establishment of an independent Palestinian State; it was also disgraceful evidence of the international community's failure to apply and protect international law. To cleanse itself, Israel had to recognize its historical responsibility for the pain and suffering it had caused the Palestinian people, and it had to be driven to undo the wrongs done to them.

Mr. KUMALO ([South Africa](#)) took the floor, for a second time, to make a statement on the right of peoples to self-determination. South Africa found it most unfortunate that the international community still had to grapple with the subject of the right to self-determination, long after its enunciation by the United Nations General Assembly. He focused on the current situation in the Middle East, which he said posed a threat to international peace and security. South Africa viewed, with deep concern, the continuing occupation of Palestinian territory, by Israel, in contravention of international law. He noted that the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 had catalogued a litany of violations visited upon the Palestinian people, the root cause of which was their wish to exercise their right to self-determination in an independent and sovereign State.

South Africa called on both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East. His delegation supported the internationally agreed consensus expressed in United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which recognized Israel's right to exist and affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign State, with Jerusalem as its capital. South Africa further affirmed the African Union resolution, calling upon the international community, and the members of the Quartet in particular, to reactivate the plan to pave the way for a return to the negotiating table, in order to achieve a lasting and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the basis of two States living, side by side, in peace and security.

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HESHAMMOHAMED EMAN AFIFI ([Egypt](#)) ...

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The peace process in the Middle East, he said, had to be re-launched on the basis of an independent Palestinian State, enabling the Palestinian people to exercise all their legitimate rights – above all, their right to self-determination. The international community had to guarantee Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories in Syria and Lebanon and invite Israel to put a halt to its daily aggression in Palestine and Lebanon. The international community had made immense progress in guaranteeing respect for human rights, but such progress could not be complete, so long as a double standard was applied. Unless the Human Rights Council broached issues from the standpoint of racial discrimination, the world would face very unfortunate repercussions. The failure of the Security Council to ensure peace and security had given rise to an outburst of violence in the region; thus Arab States, on 27 September, had addressed the Security Council, with the aim of seeing it fulfil its responsibilities, as far as the Middle East was concerned, and to guarantee, to the peoples in the region, their natural right to self-determination.

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