



## General Assembly

### GA/EF/3167

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Sixty-first General Assembly  
Second Committee  
27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> Meetings (AM & PM)

#### SECOND COMMITTEE PASSES DRAFT RESOLUTION CALLING ON ISRAEL NOT TO EXPLOIT,

#### DAMAGE OR DEplete NATURAL RESOURCES IN OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS

Delegates Approve 'Permanent Sovereignty'  
Text by 141 Votes in Favour to 6 Against, with 6 Abstentions

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#### Background

Meeting this morning to begin its consideration of poverty eradication and other development issues, the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) was expected later to conclude its general discussion on groups of countries in special situations (for background, please see Press Release GA/EF/3166 of 8 November).

The Committee was also expected to take action on a draft resolution relating to the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. Action was expected also on two draft resolutions concerning the follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development.

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#### Introduction and Action on Draft Resolutions

At the invitation of the Committee Chairperson, delegates broke off their discussion on groups of countries in special situations to take action on two draft resolutions.

The Committee first took up the text on permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (document [A/C.2/61/L.13/Rev.1](#)).

The representative of Egypt introduced the draft, saying minor amendments had been made to the text, including the removal of references to the "razing of agricultural fields" and the addition of the phrase "and of its grave effect on natural resources and economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people" in operational paragraph 13.

He said the timing of the action on that text coincided with a new massacre of the Palestinian people, further emphasizing the need for the United Nations to play its role in ending their suffering, as well as the Israeli occupation.

The representative of Israel said in a general statement before the vote, that his country had a vested interest in improving the Palestinian economy for the benefit of both sides. There were more than 150,000 Palestinians in Israel's workforce whose income constituted a significant part of the total income of the Palestinian labour force.

He said the unbalanced draft resolution before the Committee would not contribute in anyway to establishing a climate of peace and security, which was essential for economic progress. Nor would it contribute to the overall peace process in the region. It ignored the main cause of economic deterioration in Palestine: terrorist activities by the Hamas Government, which had prevented co-action in many fields, including economic cooperation.

As long as the Hamas policy of terror continued, there would be no economic cooperation, he emphasized. The organization stood behind the attacks against Israel, and was responsible for the deterioration of the economic situation in Palestine. Not a single operative paragraph in the ill-conceived resolution would bring the region closer to a solution.

The Committee then went on to approve the text by a recorded vote of 141 in favour to 6 against (Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, United States), with 6 abstentions (Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Nauru, Uganda) (see annex).

#### Explanations of Vote

The representative of Finland, speaking in explanation of position on behalf of the European Union, said he had voted in favour of the draft because the natural resources of any territory seized by force of arms should not be used inappropriately or illegally by the occupying Power. The European Union also reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories, and reaffirmed that any infringement of the rights of the Palestinian people with regard to that Convention was illegal.

However, the issues referred to in the text should be dealt with in the framework of the permanent status negotiations of the Middle East peace process, he said. The European Union remained committed, in close cooperation with its partners in the Quartet and the Arab world, to assisting the parties in their effort to reach a final settlement. The resolution approved today, therefore, was not to be considered prejudicial to, or pre-emptive of, the outcome of those negotiations. Any action or statement that might be seen as doing so must be avoided. Finally, the position of the European Union regarding the separation barrier and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice remained unchanged.

The representative of the United States said his country had long supported the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. President George W. Bush supported the vision of two democratic States -- Israel and Palestine -- living side by side in peace and security. However, through its failure to recognize Israel, the Palestinian Authority's policies continued to create hardships for its people. President Mahmoud Abbas, by contrast, remained committed to a platform of peace.

The United States could not support the draft resolution because it improperly involved the General Assembly and contained one-sided and imbalanced language, he said. There was a role for the United Nations in supporting the two parties as the Organization played an important role as a member of the Quartet and must be seen as an honest broker. The Second Committee should not be used to promote one-sided views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The representative of Canada expressed concern over the humanitarian condition in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, noting that the protection of, and right to, natural resources was critical to any viable State. However, Canada had abstained from the vote because it believed the draft resolution not to contribute constructively to resolving the Middle East conflict.

He said the reference to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the separation wall should have reflected its non-binding status, or at least been followed by a reference to Israel's security concerns. Also, while the term "character" had no known legal meaning, Canada took it to be synonymous with the term "status".

The representative of the Republic of Moldova aligned her delegation with the European Union's position on the text.

The representative of Kuwait asked which delegation had asked for a recorded vote, to which Ms. INTELMAAN ( Estonia ), Committee Chairperson, replied that the request had been made by the United States.

#### General Statement

The representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, offering a general statement, said lone voices had attempted to derail the Committee's approval of the draft by arguing that it was one-sided and unbalanced. Since 1972, the Committee had approved resolutions affirming the sovereign right of the Palestinian people over their natural resources and calling on Israel to cease its violations of those rights, only to see them disregarded by Israel.

In fact, he stressed, Israel had intensified its abuses and acted to obstruct efforts to achieve peace through its use of indiscriminate force against the Palestinian people, as it had done in the recent massacre that had taken the lives of 20 Palestinian civilians, including very young children and some women. Israel had also continued with its illegal building of settlements and its construction of the separation wall, in disregard of international law.

The remarks made earlier by the Israeli delegate were offensive and unacceptable, he said. Calling the draft resolution "irrelevant" was akin to taking a direct stab at the will of the international community and the very principles that the United Nations stood for. Indeed, United Nations resolutions represented the will of its Member States, and it could not start tailoring resolutions to the preferences of a minority that had chosen to remove itself from the consensus.

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### ANNEX

#### Vote on Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources

The draft resolution on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (document A/C.2/61/L.13/Rev.1) was adopted by a recorded vote of 141 in favour to 6 against, with 6 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya,

Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against : Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States.

Abstain : Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Nauru, Uganda.

Absent : Afghanistan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Kiribati, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Swaziland, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Zambia.

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