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UNITED NATIONS MUST REINVIGORATE STALLED MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, SAY SPEAKERS IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Palestine's Observer Says United States' Role Ineffective;
Israel States Palestinian Violence Left Process in Shambles

The time had come for the United Nations to reinvigorate the stalled Middle East peace process, several speakers told the General Assembly this afternoon, as it began its consideration of the question of Palestine. They said all Member States must respect peace and security if the Organization was to remain an effective mechanism for resolving conflicts.

The Observer for Palestine said the peace process had reached an impasse due to the Israeli Government's provocative acts. On the issue of Jerusalem, Israel was challenging the international community and rejecting the implementation of United Nations resolutions. The blockade of the occupied Palestinian territories prevented entry and departure of people, food and materials and increased unemployment.

The United States was not an effective player, he continued. Although it was the main sponsor of the peace process, it was reluctant to persuade the Israeli Government to fulfil its obligations. Rather than play a vital role, the United States hesitated, giving Israel time to confiscate more land, build more settlements and intensify their blockade.

The representative of Israel said his Government had inherited a peace process in a shambles because the Palestinian side had not held up its part of the bargain. Israelis had paid with their lives in suicide bombings originating in areas under the control of its negotiating partners. It had, therefore, chosen to make an impaired peace process work, by adding peacemaking principles that had been previously lacking.

Violence was totally incompatible with peace and reconciliation, he said. The Palestinian fight against terrorism must be constant, not contingent on new concessions by Israel. Rather than being mired in the nuances of the 1993 Interim Agreement, the parties should quickly enter and accelerate their negotiations over permanent status and adjust their expectations. A permanent status solution that took account of Israel's vital self-defence needs was possible, but it would require flexibility, creativity and new political thinking.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People said its role remained essential during the transitional period and until a desired solution was reached. While the Committee condemned acts of violence by extremists, retaliatory actions by the Israeli Government against the entire Palestinian population could not be justified or accepted as necessary security measures. Strangling the economy and impeding normal movement between Palestinian areas compounded feelings of insecurity and tension.

He said the Security Council, the Assembly and the international community must intensify efforts to reinvigorate the peace process. The Committee had made an effective and constructive contribution through seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations. It attached particular importance to the programme of studies and publications, and other activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights, including its training programme for the staff of the Palestinian Authority and its electronic information system on the question of Palestine.

Statements were also made by Malta, Luxembourg, on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Niger, China, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates.

The Observer for Palestine also spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

The General Assembly will meet again at 3 p.m. Tuesday, 2 December, to continue its consideration of the question of Palestine.

Assembly Work Programme

The General Assembly met this afternoon to begin its consideration of the question of Palestine. The Assembly had before it a report from the Secretary-General (document [A/52/581](#)) on developments during the last year of the Middle East peace process. It also had before it the report of the Committee on the Rights of the Palestinian People (document [A/52/35](#)) and a letter from the Chairman of the Committee (document [A/52/571](#)).

The Report of the Secretary-General responds to an Assembly resolution last year, which asked the Secretary-General to continue his efforts on the question of Palestine with the parties concerned and in consultation with the Security Council. The Secretary-General says that in a letter on 18 September 1997 the Council said it was gravely concerned about recent developments in the Occupied Territories and the region. The Council called on concerned parties to pursue negotiations and fulfil their obligations under the Agreements achieved. It was determined to provide backing to the Middle East peace process, giving full support to the Agreements achieved, as well as to their timely implementation.

The Secretary-General notes comments from the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in a note verbale dated 6 October, which stated that since 4

December 1996 the Middle East peace process had witnessed setbacks, mostly arising from Israel's lack of commitment towards peace in the region. The representative said the international community was seized with a number of unilateral Israeli actions that violated agreements, including attempts to alter the status and demographics of Jerusalem, the increase in settlement activities, as well as the delay in implementing the provisions of the transitional agreement (with the exception of the part related to Al-Khalil/Hebron). The note from Egypt also said the construction of a new Israeli settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa to the South of Occupied East Jerusalem was a major illegal unilateral measure taken by Israel to pre-empt the outcome of final status negotiations. Stressing the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the note said the Israeli Government must adhere to the basic starting principles of the peace process.

The Secretary-General's report includes a note verbale, dated 13 October, from the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations, which said the Middle East peace process had deteriorated because of Israeli Government policies and actions which seemed to be aimed at "burying" the existing agreements between the parties. The note said the transitional agreement has not been implemented, with the exception of the part related to Al-Khalil (Hebron), the negotiations on the final settlement had not started, and the economic and living conditions of the Palestinian people have deteriorated. The Israeli Government had adopted guidelines contradicting the agreements reached, made it clear that the timetable agreed upon would not be respected, resumed settlement activities in the occupied territory and opened a tunnel in the vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied East Jerusalem. It had even intensified its settlement activities, including the building of a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa and has continued to Judaize Jerusalem.

The note from the Permanent Observer called upon the Assembly to uphold its positions in relation to the final settlement, and hoped the United Nations would be involved in bringing the peace process back on track. The involvement of the Security Council would also be an important factor. In his observations, the Secretary-General states that the stagnation of the Middle East peace process during the past year has been disappointing. The protocol concerning the redeployment in Hebron, concluded on 17 January 1997, had inspired the hope that confidence and mutual trust between Palestinians and Israelis would increase and create a positive environment for successful negotiations. The start by Israel of construction of a settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa thwarted that positive trend and led to a dangerous and lengthy stalemate. The terrorist bombings in Israel had further shaken the confidence between Israelis and Palestinians and deepened the crisis. The Secretary-General notes that enhancing the role of the United Nations to combat terrorism is a part of his programme for reform.

The parties to the peace process bear responsibility for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict in a just and comprehensive manner in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, the Secretary-General says. Improving living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza is imperative for creating a favourable atmosphere for the peace process on the ground. In that connection, it is important that UNRWA be put on a sound financial footing, so that the downgrading in its services to the Palestinian refugees can be avoided.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/52/35) reviews actions taken during the past year by the Committee and by the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine. (The Committee was established by the General Assembly in November 1975 to recommend a programme to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly.) The report notes that the Department of Public Information (DPI), is still providing world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information to heighten awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People.

It also reviews recommendations made by the Committee, which considers it essential for the international community to intensify its support of the 1993 Declaration of Principles by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the effective implementation of agreements and for the resumption of all aspects of mutually agreed upon negotiations. It expresses its "concern and anguish" that the hopes arising from positive developments were not carried through in the past year, that the peace process appeared to be in jeopardy. The Committee fully supports the recommendations in Assembly resolutions adopted at its emergency special session, in particular for the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to consider measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

The report says the Committee reaffirms United Nations responsibility on the question of Palestine until a just and lasting settlement is reached and reaffirms that such a settlement must be based on Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#), the withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, the principle of exchange of land for peace and the exercise of the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee considers that broadening its membership to include countries that support its objectives would enhance the Assembly's contribution to peace at this important stage.

The letter from the Chairman of the Committee (A/52/571) dated 5 November, states that South Africa, by a note verbale on 10 October, asked to be considered as a member of the Committee. At its 232nd meeting on 5 November, the Committee approved this request and was now bringing it to the attention of the Assembly for its approval.

Committee Report

IBRA DEGUÈNE KA (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said the Committee welcomed the signing of the Declaration of Principles and subsequent developments, in particular the Agreement on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of May 1995. However, the situation on the ground remained fragile and fraught with pitfalls. As the organ established by the Assembly to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee continued to assert that its own role remained essential during the transitional period envisaged by the accords and until the desired solution had been reached. It had been deeply saddened and disconcerted by the increasing difficulties encountered by the peace process.

The resumption by the Israeli Government of the policy of settlements construction and land confiscation; the growing encroachments into occupied East Jerusalem, including denial of residency rights to Palestinians born and living there; the blockades of the areas under the Palestinian Authority; and the postponement of withdrawal from the West Bank had created a situation of deepening hardship and despair in the occupied Palestinian territory.

He said the Committee had condemned acts of violence by extremists. However, the retaliatory actions by the Israeli Government against the entire Palestinian population could not be justified or accepted as necessary security measures. By strangling the economy and impeding normal movement between Palestinian areas, those actions compounded feelings of insecurity and tension. The Security Council, the Assembly and the international community must intensify efforts to reinvigorate the peace process. The Committee had done everything possible to make an effective and constructive contribution through seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations organized under its auspices. It attached particular importance to the programme of studies and publications, and other activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, including its training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority, and its electronic information system on the question of Palestine.

He said South Africa had recently become a full member of the Committee, and other Governments had expressed an interest in doing so. Events of the past year, he continued, had shown the great dangers of the politics of ideological rigidity and exclusion pursued by the present Israeli leadership. They went directly counter to the historical trend towards the resolution of conflicts through mutual accommodation and cooperation, which had so successfully inspired the peace process. By seeking to impose an unjust peace based on the denial of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, those policies threatened to destroy the fragile web of economic, political and social relationships that were being created. A unique historical opportunity was being squandered, with no feasible alternative being proposed.

GEORGE SALIBA (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, introduced its annual report, which covered the new developments concerning the question of Palestine, the peace process and the activities of the Committee since last year's report. He said that during the past year, the Committee had continued to do its utmost to implement the mandate given to it by the General Assembly.

Statements

FAROUK KADDOUMI, Chairman of the Palestinian Observer Delegation, said Israeli extremism had been manifested in the backtracking of previous obligations of the Israeli Government. Prime Minister Netanyahu insisted on discussing the departure from Hebron and wasted seven months in the process. The Israeli Government then immediately started laying the foundation for construction of Jabal Abu Ghneim. On Jerusalem, Israel was challenging the international community and rejecting the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions with the continued confiscation of Palestinian homes.

The United States, as the main sponsor of the peace process, had been reluctant to persuade the Israeli Government to fulfil its obligations. When Ms. Albright became Secretary of State, he went on, she was hesitant to give the necessary push to the peace process and bring it back on track. She witnessed the depth of suffering of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation, especially the blockade. Although she knew it was a major point of contention, she never referred to the need to cease construction of settlements.

The Israeli Government had not complied with Security Council resolutions or the peace accords. The United States was supposed to play a vital role in reviving the peace process but hesitated, thus giving Israel time to confiscate more land, to build more settlements and to intensify the blockade, which prevented entry and departure to and from the Palestinian territories. It isolated small towns and prevented movement of the population, and it increased unemployment to 65 per cent and hampered the movement of food and materials. He said Israel also withheld taxes collected from Palestinians and owed to the Palestinian Authority. Agreements on the return of displaced persons, totalling no fewer than 750,000 people, had not been complied with. Israel continued to deny those refugees their fundamental rights in returning to their homes.

The peace process had reached an impasse due to the behaviour and provocative acts of the Israeli Government, he said. The United States should play a crucial role in reviving it. The time had come for the United Nations, which had a history of addressing other international issues, to preserve the peace process. For the United Nations to be effective, the requirements for peace and security must be respected by all Member States.

He said the sanctions against Iraq, Libya and the Sudan had started to raise questions in the international community about the use of sanctions. The time had come to lift sanctions so that Iraq could return as an effective member of the international community. He said he expected full implementation of the resolutions from the Assembly's tenth emergency special session, including the recommendation for a Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

JEAN-LOUIS WOLZFELD (Luxembourg), speaking for the European Union and the associated countries of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, as well as Cyprus and Iceland, said the Union called on all parties to resume political dialogue. They should continue negotiations on implementing the interim agreement and the Protocol of Hebron, and resume the permanent status talks. It was important to refrain from actions that might prejudice the permanent status, and there must be cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The European Union would intensify its diplomatic efforts and economic commitments in the region.

During a November visit to the region, the Union's President-in-Office had argued in favour of opening the Gaza airport, building the port, free passage for Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank and the need to finalize a code of good conduct between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. He had also said those confidence-building measures could not obscure the agreed aims of the peace process, including withdrawal of Israeli troops, the fight against terrorism and opening permanent status negotiations. The Union was the largest donor of funds to the Palestinians. It funded economic and social development, with aid to education and the media, to technical assistance to municipalities and the Palestinian Legislative Council, and to help the Palestinian Authority meet its immediate needs following Israel's withholding of due fiscal revenues. There was no alternative to the peace process launched in Madrid and Oslo. The Union called on the region's governments and peoples to regain the spirit of mutual trust that kindled the hope of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

ANWARUL KARIM CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) said it was unfortunate that the Israeli authorities had, in defiance of all United Nations resolutions and in flagrant violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, continued to pursue repressive policies in the occupied Palestinian territories including Jerusalem. Bangladesh had consistently expressed strong solidarity with Palestine, in particular at the United Nations and in all major international forums, and it reiterated its strong condemnation of Israel's policy of systematic violation of international humanitarian law, as well as fundamental freedoms and basic human rights in the occupied territories.

There was need for implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which formed the basis of the Middle East peace process, as well as the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreement reached between the parties, including the redeployment of Israeli forces from the West Bank and the commencement of negotiations on the final settlement. He said Bangladesh joined others in calling for reinjection of momentum into the stalled Middle East peace process. It was necessary to end all illegal measures and actions by Israel in the interest of restoring mutual confidence and promoting peace. The international community must support the peace process by extending economic, financial and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during the interim period.

He said Bangladesh strongly supported the view that, with the exception of voting rights and candidature, Palestine should enjoy the same rights and privileges in the work of the Assembly or other organs of the United Nations as those conferred on Member States.

MAKARIM WIBISONO (Indonesia) said it was appalling that Israeli authorities were perpetuating policies that could only bring disastrous consequences. The expansion of settlements in and around Jabal Abu Ghneim was foremost among those policies and was compounded by other "untenable actions", including the demolition of properties, closures and the denial of residency rights to Palestinians to live in Jerusalem by the confiscation of documents. Such acts had dealt a serious blow to the peace process and inflamed passions throughout the occupied territories and around the world. The Israeli Government could not hide behind the "flimsy pretext" of security considerations to justify its actions against an entire people, nor could it rationalize intimidation, repression and persecution. Peace and security were intertwined and could not be based on the usurpation of the basic rights of the Palestinian people. Israel must be urged to fulfil its legal commitments with consistency and fairness.

He said the United Nations and its agencies had a central role to play in alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people and assisting in nation-building. It was gratifying that the Special Coordinator of the Occupied Territories, Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, would serve as a focal point for United Nations efforts, and would also maintain contact with the donor community and non-governmental organizations. A durable and just solution could be attained only if the Palestinian people were allowed their legitimate national rights, including the right to return to an independent homeland based on full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and [425 \(1978\)](#). In May, Indonesia had hosted the Asian seminar and non-governmental organization symposium on the question of Palestine.

JOSEPH DIATTA (Niger) said the deadlock in the peace process was caused by Israel's building of a new settlement in East Jerusalem, which violated the peace accords. That decision led to increasing violence and the loss of Palestinian as well as Israeli lives. That was why, combined with the fact that the Security Council had twice been prevented from considering the question, the international community, through the General Assembly, had held a special emergency session on the matter. Although the overwhelming majority of Member States voted in favour of resolutions calling on Israel to cease illegal activities in occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, the situation had worsened.

He called on the parties to resume ongoing dialogue and cooperation, and to implement the accords based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and on the land for peace principle. A just and lasting settlement depended on the Palestinian people's exercise of their inalienable rights, including the creation of an independent State, and respect for United Nations resolutions and the peace accords.

The President of the Assembly, HENNADIY UDOVENKO (Ukraine) then announced that five draft resolutions related to the question of Palestine -- documents A/52/L.49 to L.53 -- were being distributed to the delegations in the hall.

QIN HUASUN (China) said that in the six years since the Madrid Conference, there had been important headway in the Middle East peace process because of the joint efforts of both Palestine and Israel, as well as extensive international efforts. However, Israel's insistence on building Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem had led to serious difficulties in the peace process, including suspension of the Palestine-Israeli peace talks and an escalation of terrorist violence. Only a comprehensive, fair and reasonable settlement of the Palestinian question and the restoration of all legitimate national rights, including the right to establish an independent Palestine State could bring a lasting peace in the Middle East region. All parties should take a flexible and pragmatic approach, and strictly observe and implement agreements already reached. They should fulfil their obligations, remove obstacles and resume early talks based on relevant United Nations resolutions and on the principle of "land for peace".

He said the Israeli side should refrain from enforcing closures on the self-rule areas or "freezing" revenues of Palestinians at will. The international community should also provide more support and assistance for the Palestinian people. Developed countries should carry out their commitments at an early date in order to facilitate economic recovery and development in the self-rule areas.

DORE GOLD (Israel) said the present Government had inherited a peace process that was in a "shambles" because the core bargain of the Oslo agreements had been repeatedly violated. That was that Israel would address Palestinian aspirations by creating areas of Palestinian self-government and that the Palestinian Authority would assume responsibility for security in those areas. That bargain had not been kept. As a result, Israelis had paid with their lives in brutal suicide bombings in their cities. The wave of attacks in Israel was emanating from areas under the control of its negotiating partners. Only by insisting on their accountability could Israel save the lives of its people. Therefore, it had chosen the option of making an impaired peace process work, by adding peacemaking principles that had been previously lacking.

During the Assembly's general debate in September, Israel's Foreign Minister had suggested a code of conduct for strengthening negotiations. Its first principle was that violence was totally incompatible with peace and reconciliation; the Palestinian fight against terrorism must be constant and not contingent on the extent of Israeli concessions, as had been explicitly demanded by Colonel Jabril Rajub of the Palestinian Authority.

He said Palestinian security forces must quell street fighting in Bethlehem and Hebron instead of inciting it. Chairman Arafat must give no "green lights" to Hamas to attack Israel as occurred on 9 March. The masterminds of the 1996 Dizengoff Center bombing in Tel Aviv must be prosecuted and imprisoned rather than set free to organize new cells for attacking Israel as was occurring today.

The code of conduct suggested that the continuity of contacts between Israelis and Palestinians be protected and not disrupted for short-term gain. Normalization between Israel and the wider region should not be halted, but increased. Differences should be resolved through bilateral negotiations and not in international forums. Israel, he went on, also insisted that the Oslo process be based on the principle of reciprocity.

He said that on 15 January, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Chairman Yasser Arafat committed themselves to implement mutual obligations in a "Note for the Record", signed by the United States peace negotiator Dennis Ross. While parts of the international community pressured Israel to move on with the peace process, not a single Palestinian commitment in that document had been implemented. The revision of the Palestinian Covenant calling for Israel's destruction remained incomplete; illegal firearms had not been collected; the language of incitement continued; not a single terrorist had been extradited; and the organizational structure of terrorism remained intact within the areas of the Palestinian Authority.

He said Israel had redeployed in Hebron, freed prisoners and had offered a first stage of further redeployment that would have tripled the area of full Palestinian control from 2.8 per cent of the West Bank to 10.1 per cent. It was proposing a second further redeployment. Chairman Arafat had signed the Interim Agreement in Washington in 1995, knowing that it was left up to Israel to decide the size of a credible further redeployment. Israel was being asked to make new concessions that went beyond the Oslo Agreements in order to win Palestinian compliance with security responsibilities. Instead of facing sanctions for its adoption of violence, the Palestinian Authority expected to be rewarded. Rather than being mired in the nuances of the Interim Agreement, the parties should quickly enter and accelerate their negotiations over permanent status.

He said both Israelis and Palestinians would have to adjust their expectations. A permanent status solution between them was possible that took into account Israel's vital self-defence needs. It would require flexibility and creativity and new political thinking. A third way must be found between unbridled Palestinian self-determination and the past record of Israeli military control. It was time to begin immediate negotiations on a permanent settlement. United Nations resolutions that prejudged the outcome of those negotiations did not advance the peace process.

MARZUKI MOHAMMAD NOOR (Malaysia) said that despite repeated calls by the international community to desist from its uncompromising policies, the Israeli Government had continued to pursue them, in violation of the Israeli-Palestinian accords. Such policies included attempts to alter the status and demographic composition of Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian lands, the demolition of Arab houses and the continued delay in fully implementing the provisions of the transitional agreement. Under the present Israeli Government there had been an unprecedented increase in settlement activities throughout the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. Since it came to power in June 1996, the Israeli Government had authorized and encouraged the construction of some 19,000 housing units in existing Jewish settlements, as well as new settlements in areas such as Jabal Abu Ghneim.

He said Israeli policies regarding Arab residents in Jerusalem were motivated by its agenda to change the demographic character of the city and were designed to pre-empt the outcome of the permanent status talks on Jerusalem. Furtherance of that policy was in clear violation of the 1993 Interim Agreement, and also contravened Security Council resolutions [446 \(1979\)](#) and [465 \(1980\)](#) and, in particular, the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war. The continued Israeli occupation of Arab lands had severely impacted on the Palestinian economy in the occupied territories, leading to extreme hardship, continuing high unemployment and a decrease in real wages. It was, therefore, critical that UNRWA receive adequate and predictable funding from the international community.

GAFAAR M. ALLAGANY (Saudi Arabia) said since the convening of the Summit in Cairo, optimism and determination had prevailed across the Arab world in addressing the serious challenges faced in the Middle East. The decisions taken were a response to a crucial phase of the peace process and were aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace, pursued within the framework of international law. The Israeli Government had ignored all the Arab governments and reneged on all accords reached.

The international community had placed responsibility for the setback in the peace process to the Israeli authorities, he said. Israel's response was simply to build new settlements and expand existing ones, actions that demonstrated a determination to preserve a Jewish colonial presence in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The Israeli Ministry of Industry and Trade had approved a \$30 million investment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the Israeli Treasury announced the availability of \$16.5 million for further Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, as part of a Government plan to grant favoured development status.

He said the rate of unemployment among Palestinians had increased by approximately 40 per cent in the Gaza Strip because of the continuous Israeli policy of "strangling" the Palestinian economy. Israel continued to pursue an arbitrary, colonialist policy of ethnic cleansing. The situation in East Jerusalem had become more serious due to the large-scale withdrawal of Arab identification cards, a policy that gave silent approval to the expulsion of Arabs from Jerusalem. That policy, which was not applicable to Israelis, also impacted severely on health, education and housing.

The international community must face up to Israeli intransigence, he said. The acceptance by Arab States of the principles of the peace process such as land for peace, did not mean acceptance of Israeli intransigence. His Government had provided all possible assistance to the Palestinians and would continue its efforts to resume the peace process on both tracks. The international co-sponsors of the peace process, including the United States, must reinvigorate the process and pressure Israel into compliance.

ABDELKADER MESDOUA (Algeria) said the serious impasse facing the Middle East peace process was due primarily to the intransigent position of the current Israeli Government. Israel had tried to undermine the peace process as a whole, as well as renege on contractual agreements signed by both sides, by refusing to withdraw from Palestinian territories, continuing its attempts at Judaization and its settlement activities. Israeli policies led to the use of oppressive measures, such as the confiscation and closure of Palestinian land and the forced displacement of Palestinians. As a result of such an unacceptable approach, the prospects of peace were disappearing and the logic of confrontation and violence was overshadowing the entire peace process. The situation would not have so seriously deteriorated if the international community had been more firm in its condemnation of illegal actions, he said. Israel must be compelled to comply with United Nations decisions. The United Nations responsibility for Palestine remained as long as the cause of the Palestinian people remained; namely the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. Further, any attempt to reach a just peace should include the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon.

MOHAMMED JASSIM SAMHAN AL-NUATI (United Arab Emirates) said that United Nations resolutions, the Madrid and other agreements, and efforts by States and international organizations had met with expansion and repression carried out by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories. The economic and social infrastructure had been destroyed, which was a violation of human rights. Illegal Israeli Government behaviour revealed to the world its real intentions, which was to remain an occupying power in the Palestinian territories. The Assembly's emergency special session had described expansion of settlements in the territories as violations of the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force. Expansion of settlements and migration had doubled, he said. The Israeli Government was dealing irresponsibly with Islamic holy sites; its policies were aimed at distorting the status of occupied territories and creating a fait accompli. The international community, the European Community, the United Nations and the co-sponsors must pressure Israel to yield to legality, he continued. That required the dismantling of settlements and the opening or reopening of the Gaza airport and port, the freeing of all Palestinian prisoners, and the redeployment of Israeli forces. A settlement required compliance with United Nations resolutions, the dismantling of settlements and the establishment of an independent state with Al-Quds as its capital.

Right of Reply

NASSER AL-KIDWA, Observer for Palestine, in right of reply, said the statement by the representative of Israel contained so many fallacies that he must be living in a different world, where fairness and justice had different meanings, and where equality between nations and peoples did not exist. The core of the issue was occupation by Israel and an end to occupation was the prerequisite to peace. Talking about the vital needs of Israel implied an understanding that security could be achieved only through a just peace. Israel must remember that the Palestinian people were equal to the Israeli people; they were not followers or an ethnic minority. The present Israeli Government must end policies that violated agreements and must stop claiming that Palestinians were violating agreements to justify their own violations.

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