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SECURITY COUNCIL, TAKING UP MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, HEARS DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL

BY SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR DEPLOYMENT OF MULTINATIONAL FORCE

The Security Council this afternoon heard the views of 29 non-Council members on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, with many speakers expressing support for a call made earlier today in a closed Council meeting by the Secretary-General for the deployment of a multinational force to the region.

During the debate, which was convened in response to a request made by the representative of Tunisia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group, speakers also stressed the need to ensure an end to the violence on both sides, access for humanitarian assistance to those in need, and immediate implementation of Council resolutions [1402 \(2002\)](#) and [1403 \(2002\)](#). Those texts call for, among other provisions, both parties to move immediately towards a meaningful ceasefire; the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities; and full cooperation with United States Special Envoy General Anthony Zinni and others, to implement the Tenet plan as a first step towards implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations.

Speaking at the outset of the debate, the Permanent Observer for Palestine expressed his support for the Secretary-General's call for the creation of a multinational, credible force, dispatched to the area under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which deals with action to be taken by the Council with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression. The first and necessary step now was immediate implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), including immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps.

The representative of Israel said that, as set out in the Mitchell report, an international presence could serve no useful role and could not come about without the agreement of the parties. Israel had accepted "the idea of third-party American monitors to supervise the implementation of Tenet and Mitchell" and was "willing to favourably consider an international presence in the context of a comprehensive settlement". Israel could, however, not put its faith in a "robust international presence, which could not be effective in the face of a continuing strategy of Palestinian terrorism", he said.

Affirming his support for the Secretary-General's proposal to send a multinational force to the area, the representative of Egypt also proposed that a mission of Council members be sent to the region to investigate the destruction in Palestinian cities and crimes committed against Palestinian people by Israel.

That mission should be accompanied by all bodies of the United Nations system working in the area of humanitarian assistance and human rights, and should submit a report on the basis of which measures could be considered.

Canada's representative said the many proposals for a solution to the crisis were all based on the principle of land for peace. Obviously, the two sides could not realize the vision of living side by side in peace on their own. That could only be made a reality by the full and active participation, including on the ground, of the international community. The Secretary-General had offered a bold and courageous view on the way forward, he said, requiring the sustained presence of parties both inside and outside the region. The international community must collectively help the parties halt the fighting once and for all.

The representatives of Tunisia (for the Arab Group and in his national capacity), Pakistan, South Africa (for the Non-Aligned Movement), Spain (on behalf of the European Union and associated States), Morocco, Algeria, Kuwait, Jordan, Mongolia, Brazil, Cuba, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, Iraq, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Japan, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Korea, Mauritania and Oman also spoke.

The meeting, which began at 3:15 p.m., was suspended at 7:50 p.m. It will be reconvened tomorrow morning, when Council members will take the floor.

Background

The Security Council met this afternoon to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Chairman of the Arab Group, as expressed in his letter to the President of the Council dated 17 April (document S/2002/431).

Statements

NASSER AL-KIDWA, Permanent Observer for Palestine, said that for the twentieth consecutive day, the intensive Israeli military aggression against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority had continued, despite the adoption of Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) and appeals from all corners of the earth for withdrawal of the occupation forces from cities, villages and refugee camps in the Palestinian territory. The Israeli forces had committed grave violations of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, including the killing of civilians and destruction of houses. The war crimes were but part of the premeditated plan to destroy not only the Palestinian Authority, but also the Palestinian infrastructure in order to destroy the Palestinian future.

In the Jenin refugee camp, Israeli acts of horror included a massacre against camp inhabitants, including women and children. Bulldozers had destroyed homes, in many cases, with inhabitants inside. The occupation forces had prevented humanitarian organizations from providing any form of emergency assistance. That alone was a war crime, and perpetrators must be brought to justice. He condemned [Israeli Prime Minister] Ariel Sharon, who he said had been condemned before for committing massacres. The international community must ensure that did not happen again by taking a genuine stand regarding the Jenin massacre.

The military siege against President Yasser Arafat and the siege against the Nativity Church in Bethlehem were grave violations of international and religious norms, he said. It was shameful that some parties accepted Israeli conditions for ending the siege, as those conditions themselves were grave violations of the Geneva Conventions. He condemned the condoning of the Israeli position.

One week ago, in Madrid, the Quartet (United States, United Nations, European Union and the Russian Federation) had adopted a statement supporting immediate implementation of 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). The Palestinian side had expressed its preparedness to fully cooperate with United States Secretary of State Colin Powell on the implementation of the two resolutions. Mr. Sharon and the Israeli Government had done everything necessary to ensure the failure of the Powell mission, among other things, by refusing to withdraw.

The Council must invoke Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to enforce implementation of its resolutions. "The least we can expect is that the Council maintain seriousness in demanding respect for its resolutions", he said. The Secretary-General had repeatedly expressed clear positions on the current tragedy, including calling for measures by the Council. Today, the Secretary-General had given a detailed briefing on this position during which he had said that the Council must create a multinational, credible force, dispatched to the area under Chapter VII. He called on the Council to adopt the Secretary-General's proposal. Some protection must be provided to the Palestinian people, he stressed. The two parties must agree to implement that which had been agreed so far.

He was satisfied with the widespread understanding of the need to take up all issues, including the need to revitalize the political track. Regarding the idea of an international conference, he said Israel had made "an idiotic statement" by asserting that President Arafat could not take part. Such a conference must take place with the full participation of the members of the Quartet, as well as others. It must take up all aspects of the problems in the Middle East, including the Syrian track, and it must be based on a vision agreed upon before the beginning of the conference.

He agreed on reconciling Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#) with new initiatives, such as that of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. That was the road towards a solution and peace, allowing for the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposal of today. The first and only step to take now was immediate implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), including the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps. In the absence of such a step, the Sharon Government would take the region, and even beyond, to the very brink.

AARON JACOB ([Israel](#)) said that those who were genuinely interested in bringing peace to the Middle East must today think carefully about which steps would enhance that process, and which would be counterproductive. Both Israelis and Palestinians had declared their agreement on certain principles. At the outset of the Oslo peace process, and repeatedly since then, the Palestinians had committed themselves to renounce terrorism and violence. Everyone accepted that they had failed to do so.

He said that both parties had declared their acceptance of the Tenet plan and Mitchell recommendations in all their aspects, and Israel had accepted bridging proposal put forward by United States Special Envoy Anthony Zinni as a means to get there, in accordance with resolution 1402 (2002). The Palestinians had failed to do likewise. Israel was completing its withdrawal from Palestinian cities in accordance with resolution 1402 (2002), and would continue to do so in coming days.

It should not be forgotten, however, that that resolution had not called for withdrawal in a vacuum, he said. The Palestinians, in defiance of the Council, had failed to undertake even minimal steps in the implementation of the resolution, including a meaningful ceasefire and an end to terrorism and incitement. How should the Council respond? he asked. Was it to adopt even more one-sided resolutions and make political concessions in the face of terror?

Continuing, he asked whether the objectives were served by making new and greater demands of Israel while systematically ignoring the Palestinian failure to do the one thing to which they had repeatedly committed themselves, namely, to stop the violence and terror. The use of the term massacre in the context of the battle that had taken place in Jenin was politically convenient for the Palestinian side.

He said it was a distortion to create a moral equivalence between the suicide bomber, who deliberately targeted civilians, and the soldier whose mission was to protect against them. What had happened in Jenin was an intense gun battle between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian terrorists. The Council would do itself no credit by accepting baseless and distorted allegations as fact. The real massacres were being committed by the suicide bombers, who blew themselves up in crowds of Israeli civilians.

Surely, it was not an exaggeration to describe them as such, he went on. They were not searching out terrorists or confiscating illegal weapons; those were looking for men, women and children to murder. For those who cared about respect for humanitarian law, the real question was how those civilian areas had become centres of terrorist activity in the first place.

He wondered whether anyone had asked how large storehouses of weapons, explosives, and bomb factories could exist in a supposedly civilian

refugee camp administered by the United Nations. For years, terrorists had armed themselves and taken up residence within those camps, yet the international community, the United Nations and humanitarian agencies had uttered barely a word. Only now, after terrorist massacres had forced Israel's hand, had many responded, pointing the finger at Israel's actions rather than those of the terrorists.

"Israel abhors the fact that it was compelled to use violence in response to the Palestinians' abject failure to live up to their commitments", he said. Israel was obligated by international humanitarian law, and despite the allegations, it had done its utmost in extremely difficult conditions to protect the civilians and international personnel on the ground. At the same time, he continued, no one could deny that the situation was difficult and that civilians had suffered. Everything possible must be done to ensure their protection. Surely, that must begin by ending, once and for all, the use made by terrorists of civilians and civilian installations.

He said that the pattern of distortion and abuse of civilian objects was no clearer than with regard to the situation at the Church of the Nativity, from which gunmen continued to fire at Israeli soldiers. Both customary and conventional law made clear that using cultural property, such as a holy site, to support a military attack was a war crime. Indeed, when such objects were unlawfully used for military purposes, they lost their protection as cultural objects and became legitimate military targets.

Despite that, he said, Israel had no intention of returning fire at the gunmen holding hostage the Church of the Nativity. Rather, it continued to try and negotiate with those hiding inside, in order to bring about a non-violent resolution of the stand-off. So far, those inside had shown no interest in ending the crisis peacefully.

The Council would do itself no credit by accepting baseless and distorted allegations as fact, he said. During Secretary of State Powell's visit to the region, progress had been achieved. Hopefully, his continued efforts and the engagement of the American Administration would ensure that the parties get back on the right track. Mr. Powell's visit also succeeded in quieting somewhat the situation on Israel's northern border, despite the Council's inaction.

He said that the Council must bear in mind that through the period of Hezbollah's attacks, an internationally recognized armed military presence in the area had failed to bring those to an end. In fact, despite Israel's full and confirmed withdrawal and the presence of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), terrorism emanating from Lebanon had continued virtually unabated. Was there any legitimate basis to believe that there was such a presence to exist in the Palestinian territories that the result would be any different? he asked.

As stated in the Mitchell report, and repeated by virtually all members of the international community, an international presence could serve no useful role and could not come about without the agreement of the parties. Israel had made it clear that it accepted "the idea of third party American monitors to supervise the implementation of Tenet and Mitchell" and was "willing to favourably consider an international presence in the context of a comprehensive settlement". But it could not put its faith in a "robust international presence, which could not be effective in the face of a continuing strategy of Palestinian terrorism", he said.

"Israel has no war with the Palestinian people", he said. "We have no war with the Palestinian aspiration for statehood." It had a war with terror and with those determined not to create the Palestinian State, but to destroy the Jewish one. The Council would not serve the cause of peace in the Middle East by condemning Israeli actions and ignoring the violence, terrorism, and incitement that continued to emanate from the Palestinian leadership. The best hope for peace would come from the international community's demand that both sides implement what had already been agreed.

NOUREDDINE MEJDOUB ([Tunisia](#)), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said the importance of the Council's meeting was that it came so soon after United States Secretary of State Powell's mission to the Middle East. The entire international community had pinned high hopes on what could be accomplished. Those hopes had been and continued to be frustrated because of the flat rejection of all United Nations resolutions.

He said that all international calls to Israel to resort to reason and avoid violence in the interest of safety of all the people in the region and the world had also been ignored. Serious international repercussions would emanate from the continued Israeli attempts to besiege an entire people and resort to any means to starve them and prevent them from living in safety. It was inconceivable that Palestinian people were being systematically massacred and subjected to other crimes against humanity and even genocide.

Despite the fact that international media and humanitarian workers had routinely been denied access to the region, particularly Palestinian refugee camps, staggering crimes and horrific conditions had been revealed by organizations such as Human Rights Watch, he said. That was particularly true of the Jenin camp where physical intimidation, arbitrary arrest and other inhuman treatment had been uncovered. Those atrocities amounted to crimes of war forbidden by international law. Israeli officials had refused to address the issue.

He said Israel had refused to allow Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to carry out a fact-finding mission to the occupied territories and refugee camps. To prevent such a mission was an attempt by Israel to gain time so that the humanitarian atrocities being committed there could be covered up.

Recalling Security Council resolutions [1397 \(2002\)](#), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), he said Israel should, by its actions, confirm the will of the international community and not ignore the provisions of international instruments or disregard international humanitarian and ethical norms. Concurrently, the Council should say "enough is enough" to all those that violated international law. It was the duty of all to shoulder that responsibility without preferential treatment. Anyone belonging to the international community should be held to international standards and norms. It was also time to "internationalize" the situation by requesting more commitment from international parties, particularly the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union.

Among the international community's priorities now were several important tasks, including forcing Israel to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from the cities and villages that were occupied. It was crucial to force Israel to lift immediately all barriers placed before humanitarian organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and to allow those organizations to enter the region in order to help innocent civilians. Israel should also be forced to end the siege on many sacred sites, particularly the Church of the Nativity.

He said Israel should also end the media blackout -- it was necessary for international media and humanitarian organizations be allowed to report

truthfully on the situation on the ground. It was likewise necessary for Israel to respond positively to Mary Robinson's requests to carry out a mission to the region. The Council should request the Secretary-General to send an international committee to monitor the situation on the ground, particularly what the Israeli authorities were doing in the Palestinian occupied territories. Only by taking such steps would the situation change, and the Palestinian people be protected from Israeli oppression and pillars of stability be returned to the region.

He welcomed the initiative to send an international force to the region. It was necessary, he stressed, to re-open the political dialogue between both sides.

Speaking in his national capacity, he said what was happening in the Middle East was an unprecedented phenomenon for the United Nations, particularly since a United Nations resolution had given birth to Israel. The international community must imagine it was dreaming as Israel defied international law and its own protectors. He supported the draft resolution that was before the Council today. That text would enlighten the wider international community regarding Arab opinions and would oblige global actors to admit that the use of double standards in the implementation of international agreements was unacceptable.

It was up to Israel to give proof that a cousin was a part of the family and could not, therefore, behave as a thief, he said. The Arab world had put all its cards on the table at the Beirut Summit. Why had Mr. Sharon not yet grasped that opportunity to state his opinion? he asked. He suspected it was because

Mr. Sharon was incorrigible. It had been said that there was no military solution to the situation in the Middle East – only a political solution. There was no need to confound terrorism with a national liberation movement, he said.

The right to self-determination of the Palestinian people should be satisfied at the same time as Israelis' right to security, he said. The presence of a multilateral force would most certainly end all violence. Neither side would dare breach such an armistice. Recent history had shown the success of such enterprises.

AHMED ABOUL GHEIT (Egypt) said the Council was dealing with the results of the Israel aggression against the Palestinian people and its infrastructure, Israeli contempt for Council resolutions and its lack of respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention. Council members must defend the principles of international law and impose Israeli respect for it. The Council should take action to dispatch a mission of its members to investigate the destruction in Palestinian cities and crimes committed against Palestinian people by Israel. That mission should be accompanied by all bodies of the United Nations system working in the area of humanitarian assistance and human rights, and should submit a report on the basis of which measures could be considered.

Immediate approval of the Secretary-General's proposal to dispatch an international force to the region was also required in order to verify full withdrawal from areas re-occupied since the end of last month, he said. The Council should further impose Israeli respect for freedom of movement of international humanitarian organizations to provide assistance and relief to the Palestinian people. The Council, particularly its permanent members, should oblige the Israeli Government to end the siege of President Arafat's headquarters and end desecration of Christian religious places.

He said the right to resist foreign occupation had been established by international law and the United Nations Charter. It was, therefore, not possible to call upon the Palestinian people to accept occupation of its lands by combative gangs living in settlements. There could be no military solution to the conflict, and Israel would eventually reach that conclusion. The resolution of the Palestinian problem should be based on full withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, as well as on agreement on security measures for everyone.

SHAMSHAD AHMAD (Pakistan) said it was a matter of concern that Israel persisted with its defiance of successive resolutions recently adopted by the Security Council. The tragedy in the Middle East continued to pose a mounting threat to regional peace. It also represented a serious crisis, which the Secretary-General had aptly described as an "appalling" humanitarian situation. He said nothing could justify the wanton killing of dozens, if not hundreds, of Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp. There must be an immediate comprehensive and impartial international inquiry.

While Chairman Arafat had demonstrated commendable respect for humanitarian law by denouncing all terrorist attacks that targeted innocent civilians, Israel too must abide by international and humanitarian law, he continued. The Council must not allow selectivity and double standards in the implementation of its resolutions. It must take effective measures, if necessary under Article VII of the United Nations Charter, to ensure the immediate cessation of all Israeli military action and the total withdrawal of its forces from the occupied territories, as well as urgent resumption of the political process for the settlement of the Palestinian issue.

He said his country deplored the killing of innocent civilians in the Middle East and welcomed the call by the Secretary-General for deployment of an international force to ensure safety and provide an opening for diplomatic moves. The need and urgency for international intervention to save the situation from further deterioration had been adequately highlighted in the Secretary-General's statement to the Council earlier today. Pakistan supported his proposal and believed that immediate deployment of an international force in the region would not only create a secure environment through cessation of violence, but also pave the way for putting the peace process back on track. The Council must immediately authorize the deployment of such a force.

DUMISANI S. KUMALO (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said the wilful disregard of the Security Council could not be allowed to continue. That body must now take decisive action to ensure full, unconditional and immediate compliance with its resolutions, as well as respect for international humanitarian law. For those reasons, the Movement fully supported the call by the Secretary-General for the Council to authorize the deployment of an impartial multinational force, formed by a coalition of the willing, to work with the parties to end the cycle of violence. The Movement also agreed that such a force would need a robust mandate and credible strength, and that it must be of sufficient size to carry out such a mandate.

He expressed grave concern over reports of the killing of large numbers of civilians in the occupied territories, and in particular in the Jenin refugee camp, by the Israeli Defence Force. Residents of the camp had reported massacres by Israeli soldiers and the secret burial of Palestinians in mass graves. Clearly, the time had come for the United Nations to ask the Secretary-General to carry out an impartial investigation to establish the full scope of the tragic events that had taken place in Jenin. Israeli forces had widely flouted international humanitarian principles and human rights standards. The Council must now support the Secretary-General's demand that Israel provide full access to humanitarian agencies and services.

He said the Council could not allow the siege of President Arafat's headquarters to continue. The Palestinian Authority could not be expected to exercise control while its elected leaders were isolated and its infrastructure was being systematically destroyed. "We are also gravely concerned at the detention of Palestinian civilians and their leaders by Israel", he said. The continued detention of Palestinian leaders would not promote peace and political dialogue and would be interpreted by the Palestinian people and the wider international community as a sign that Israel was not serious about implementing measures towards a peaceful negotiated solution. He called on the Council to act to ensure compliance with its resolutions and to secure the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces, the signing of a ceasefire by both parties and to authorize the deployment of an international presence on the ground.

INOCENCIO F. ARIAS (Spain) spoke on behalf of the European Union, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey, Iceland and Liechtenstein. He said the virtual destruction of the Palestinian Authority, the continued isolation of Chairman Arafat and disregard for the Palestinian civilian population were unacceptable. Israel must immediately stop extrajudicial killings, lift restrictions in the territories and reverse its settlement policy. Chairman Arafat, the recognized and elected leader of the Palestinian people, must undertake the maximum possible effort to stop terrorist attacks. They were unacceptable, illegal and gravely harmed the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories was appalling, he said. It was absolutely unacceptable that humanitarian and medical organizations continued to confront risks in performing their work and accessing those populations in need. Israel must allow them full and unimpeded access. Reports about the humanitarian situation at the Jenin refugee camp were particularly alarming. The European Union deplored the loss of civilian life that had taken place, as well as the widespread and senseless destruction of civilian, medical and humanitarian infrastructure reported by international humanitarian agencies granted limited access to the camp. Israel's legitimate fight against terrorism was not served by intimidating and harassing innocent civilians, which only bred more irrational desperation and hatred.

The conflict had no military solution, he said. The political roadmap and goals to end the conflict were well known and had already been clearly set. They were Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace, the creation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State, security guarantees for the State of Israel, and the recent Arab League support of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's initiative for peace. The European Union remained convinced that a third-party monitoring mechanism on the ground was essential to restore mutual confidence and make progress on both the political and security fronts, and stood ready to take part in such a mechanism.

MOHAMED BENNOUNA (Morocco) said he had earlier expressed the hope that the mission of United States Secretary of State Powell would lead to implementation of the Council's recent resolutions. Unfortunately, despite all his efforts, he had obtained no precise commitment from the Israeli Prime Minister and no commitment to send the Israeli "intervention and repression forces" back to their bases. Action taken by the greatest Power in the world, with the support of the Quartet, had had no impact on Israel. Such a "snub" to the whole world was hardly acceptable. Nor was it acceptable to continue to maintain the siege around the offices of President Arafat, thereby humiliating him and all Palestinians.

He said that Israel had ignored the hand of peace that had emerged from the Beirut Summit. How had it expected to live and prosper in the Middle East while scorning its Arab neighbours? he asked. A failure of the Powell mission meant a failure of peace and justice, as well as a failure of the international community. It also meant a loss of credibility for the Council, which bore the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Like a tidal wave, Israeli forces had destroyed houses, schools and infrastructure, burying hundreds under the ruins.

Aid workers had reported that the Jenin refugee camp was like a city buried under an earthquake, he said. Bulldozers were only just starting to clear away tons of debris and collect bodies, and humanitarian assistance had so far been largely denied. He welcomed the initiative launched by the Secretary-General, which he had outlined this morning in the Council. It was urgent to provide all possible resources to bring assistance to the people of Palestine. It was a matter of urgency that the wounded receive care. Not to ensure that now, today, would be a crime.

He said that the internal cycle of violence, killing and destruction must be stopped. Only a multilateral force would be in a position to calm the situation and tend the victims' wounds. There was no doubt that the present situation in Palestine was a threat to international peace. Indeed, the whole region was in danger of "catching fire". An inquiry must be conducted into what had happened in the Jenin camp, by competent and impartial experts in an atmosphere of peace and calm. Israel, which was advancing its own democratic system, was duty-bound to accept that.

ABDALLAH BAALI (Algeria) said his delegation, as well as many others, had reached the point of wondering whether yet another Council debate or resolution on the situation in the Middle East could have any meaning. That was chiefly because of the arrogance and contempt with which Israel carried out its actions in the region. Israel's apparent assurance of impunity had seriously damaged the esteem in which the Council was held.

In fact, all the international norms that had been built over the years to accompany humanity in its march towards peace and justice were at risk because of a State that had taken it upon itself to flout international law.

What else could account for the unbearable images of death and devastation that continued to reach the wider world on almost a daily basis? he asked. Those images graphically revealed the horror and terror of thousands of women and children hidden under the ruins of the houses destroyed by rockets. That was made more unbearable by images of bodies strewn throughout the streets, with sick and wounded lingering near death, while international humanitarian agencies were forbidden to enter the occupied territories to provide assistance and aid.

Sadly, he said, those crimes had now been joined by the crimes of the Council and the international community, for if the Council had accepted, months ago, to deploy a force to protect the people living in the occupied territories, the violence of recent weeks most certainly would not have occurred. With that in mind, he stressed that the creation and deployment of such a force could not but illicit the support of all those who had witnessed the horrors and massacres committed by the Israeli army since the Council had last debated the situation in the Middle East. He hoped that all would act quickly to avoid a repetition of those events.

Despite repeated attempts to bring a halt to the violence, it was clear that Israel continued to defy the international community, he said. The Council must, therefore, adopt an attitude commensurate with the burden it now faced. The draft resolution under consideration today served to ensure respect for the rule of law, and the strengthening of international laws, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. It also provided the Council and the international community with a chance to make up for the crimes that had been committed.

He added that in order to ensure the protection of the unarmed Palestinians, the ban on the media must be lifted. The issue of the deployment of a multinational force must be decided immediately. Algeria was convinced that only by ensuring the satisfaction of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the creation of a Palestinian State, and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories would make it possible to establish peace and security in the region.

MOHAMMAD A. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) said he had had great hopes that the international community would have been able to make Israel implement the relevant Council resolutions, by immediately withdrawing and stopping the crimes perpetuated against the Palestinian people. Regrettably, he said, that had not happened. The impact of the Israeli actions threatened to become a humanitarian crisis not witnessed before.

Israel justified atrocities by claiming it was maintaining its security and combating terrorism, he said, but it was Israel that had implanted terrorism in the region. While Israel considered resisting occupation a form of terrorism, it must be noted that occupation engendered hatred and anger. He condemned the serious violations perpetrated against civilians, particularly in the Jenin refugee camp. It was sad and painful to see Palestinian children living the worst phase of their lives. It was, in that context, ironic that Israel wanted to participate in the upcoming special session on children of the General Assembly. He called on the international community to take the Israeli Government to account for its crimes.

He supported the demands of the Palestinian people for the Council to force Israel to implement the relevant Council resolutions immediately and to try to lift the Israeli siege of Palestinian towns and holy sites. He welcomed the Secretary-General's idea concerning a multinational force to restore stability and protect civilians. He also welcomed the efforts of United States Secretary of State Powell and the members of the Quartet. It was regretful that the Israeli Government had caused those initiatives to fail. He called upon the Quartet to pressure Israel to respect the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Prince ZEID RA'AD ZEID AL-HUSSEIN (Jordan) said that the Israeli escalation, reflected in the acts of aggression against the Palestinian people, was an "ugly criminal act" of aggression. He strongly renewed his condemnation of that aggression and the war crimes that had been committed. Israeli acts in the occupied territories were flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as the Council's resolutions. He condemned the targeting and killing of civilians on both sides.

The time had come for the Israeli leadership to realize that violence would only beget more violence and widen the chasm between the two sides, he said. The political option was the only way to overcome the crisis. He called on the Israeli Government to implement resolution 1402 (2002) and to immediately and completely withdraw its forces from the land and cities that it had reoccupied. He also called upon it to lift the siege against President Arafat and the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, and to begin implementing the Tenet plan and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee. There could be no international conference in the absence of President Arafat.

He called for the dispatch of an international fact-finding mission to the region, in light of statements made by the representatives of humanitarian organs, the ICRC, and non-governmental organizations on the events in the Jenin refugee camp, and the attempt by Israel to cover up those massacres. He supported the call by the Secretary-general on the need to dispatch a multinational force to the occupied territories, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, in order to open the way for a political settlement. He welcomed the efforts made by the United States to solve the crisis and obtain an Israeli withdrawal. He also renewed his call to the Council to shoulder its responsibilities by compelling Israel to implement the relevant resolutions.

JARGALSAIKHANY ENKHSAIKHAN (Mongolia), associating his statement with that made earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said the long-standing Middle East crisis, especially the latest Israeli and Palestinian conflict, constituted a serious threat not only to regional peace and stability, but also to global peace and security. It was absolutely clear that continued use of military force was not only unhelpful, it was also further aggravating the situation and hurting efforts to find a solution to the long-term Middle East problem.

He expressed Mongolia's deep concern over the serious deterioration in the situation in the region and the continued non-compliance with Council resolutions. Facing such an emergency situation, the international community had been seeking ways to find a productive and workable solution to ending the conflict. In the past weeks, the Council had extensively debated the issue and adopted important resolutions, as well as a presidential statement on 10 April. Mongolia supported all those efforts and believed that their implementation would not only halt the escalation of violence, it could also lead to creating conditions conducive to the resumption of negotiations.

Such negotiations, he said, could ensure the vision of the long-suffering peoples of the region living peacefully together within safe, recognized borders. The new Saudi peace initiative would allow the States of the region to normalize Arab-Israeli relations, which was of primary importance for regional peace, security, stability, mutual understanding and regional development. Mongolia supported the joint Madrid statement of the Quartet made last week and appreciated the mission of the United States Secretary of State Powell to the region.

He said immediate and more forceful measures must be taken to avoid repeating the all too familiar humanitarian tragedies in the region. He, therefore, welcomed the proposal the Secretary-General had made this morning to establish an impartial international presence on the ground in the region, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Such a force would be approved by the United Nations and formed by a multinational coalition of the willing. Such an initiative would be a concrete and constructive step that might help end the spiral of violence and lead to a gradual restoration of trust between the two sides. He hoped the Council would be able to respond expeditiously to the Secretary-General's proposal.

GELSON FONSECA (Brazil) said all would agree that the record of Council initiatives in recent weeks had been impressive, particularly when compared with its general practice of immobility and passivity. The Council had listened to the general membership on several occasions, and it had passed several resolutions calling for an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestine and containing a checklist of steps to ensure a ceasefire and a resumption of political dialogue. But the current situation represented a negation of all those efforts. Instead of withdrawing from the occupied territories, Israel had escalated its military offensive. He was appalled at the human toll of those actions. It was equally appalling that the reported human rights atrocities, particularly those in the Jenin refugee camp, could not be investigated while the destruction continued.

While Brazil failed to understand what the Israeli leadership really wanted to achieve by those actions, it did know that what was occurring in the Palestinian occupied territories was surely not the road to peace, he said. He agreed with the Secretary-General that the right to self-defence did not mean a blank check for aggression. The international community was outraged with the persistent denial of access for humanitarian agencies. Israel could not deny a fact-finding mission by the High Commissioner for Human Rights simply because such a visit was "inopportune". Israel must

allow full freedom of movement for humanitarian agencies in the occupied territories.

He said the entire United Nations had a responsibility to lay out a clear strategy to halt the humanitarian tragedy that continued to unfold in the illegally occupied territories, and to establish a clear path to rekindle hope for peace. Illegal occupation, disrespect for human rights and denial of the right to self-determination were at the root of the crisis, and those issues must be addressed within a comprehensive framework. The search for a solution could not be left entirely in the hands of the two parties as they seem to have dragged the situation to a point where they would never be able to restore trust. He condemned all acts of violence and killing of innocent civilians. Neither side could take the high ground when acts of violence were at issue, he added.

He said he hoped that both the Palestinian and Israeli leaders would realize that their own people were on the brink of exhaustion. The international community could certainly help and must continue to offer its unfailing contribution to forward peace negotiations. But, ultimately, it was up to the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to accept the simple fact that they were bound to live together, that no military solution could be imposed to end the conflict, and that they must return to the negotiating table.

At this crucial moment, the Council could not sit idly by, passively repeating calls for peace that remained unheard, he said. He, therefore, welcomed the Council's current engagement in the issue and encouraged more active involvement on the ground. An effective international presence in Palestine was immediately required. He also supported the idea of a credible international mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan. He also encouraged the Council to develop a clear strategy to set in motion the negotiating process on the basis of the proposal made by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, which had and recently been endorsed by the League of Arab States.

ORLANDO REQUEIJO GUAL ([Cuba](#)) said that, while the international community waited for the long looked for mediation of the United States, the massacres of Palestinians continued. The long delay in travelling to Ramallah had not augured well and the outcome had come as no surprise. The initiative had been a failure, but no other outcome had been possible. The heroic resistance of the Palestinian people against the illegal occupation remained firm, despite the hundreds of Palestinians killed.

The example of President Arafat, harassed, deprived and confronted by tanks and bulldozers, was a vivid illustration of the fact that he continued to adhere to his ideals, he said. President Arafat and the Palestinian people had already adopted their own strategic option: to fight occupation and to create their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. The immediate withdrawal demanded in resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) continued to be flouted with impunity. The withdrawal was fluctuating and impermanent.

Could it be that the Government of the only surviving super-Power did not have the tools to persuade its closest ally in the Middle East to comply with Council resolutions? he asked. There was only one word for this: complicity. He denounced the immorality and double standards in American foreign policies. Could the United States suspend sending arms, apply unilateral coercive sanctions, or vote in favour of sanctions and penalties against Israel as it had done against other governments? he asked. The answer was no. Unlimited protection of Israel by the United States must stop. Atrocities and violations of human rights must be condemned in an exemplary fashion. The Council could not be held hostage to the immoral veto.

ZAINUDDIN YAHYA ([Malaysia](#)) expressed his dismay at the absolute disregard by Israel towards repeated calls by the international community to immediately withdraw from Palestinian territories. Immediate measures must be taken to address the appalling humanitarian situation there. Israeli actions had led to near paralysis of all aspects of life. The Secretary-General had stated that Israeli forces had widely flouted international humanitarian principles and human rights standards, he noted.

He had hoped that the peace mission of United States Secretary of State Powell would result in a ceasefire and lead the parties to negotiations for a lasting solution. However, with absolute disregard for the efforts of its closest ally, Israel continued to pursue its military operations. With the failure of Secretary Powell's mission, Israel would continue to have a free hand. He found it inconceivable that an international peace conference proposed by Mr. Sharon should exclude Mr. Arafat.

To stop the violence, the Council must authorize the urgent dispatch of a United Nations or international peacekeeping force to the occupied territories, he said. He welcomed the Secretary-General's call for the creation of a third-party mechanism in the form of a multinational peacekeeping force as the only means to end the bloodshed. The force must be strong enough to render ineffective any challenge to its authority. He feared that the worst was yet to come for the Palestinians and urged the Council to do all it could to protect the Palestinian civilian population. He hoped that the Quartet would continue to undertake further initiatives to bring lasting peace to the Middle East.

A. GOPINATHAN ([India](#)) said that, despite the Council's recent adoption of three resolutions and one presidential statement, the crisis continued unabated. Israel's continued military action was a cause of acute concern to all. Recent events had shown that the action neither enhanced Israel's security nor served the cause of peace. If anything, it had only placed more impediments on the collective quest for a lasting peace. Further, Israel's military operations made the divide between the two peoples even sharper. Their immediate cessation, withdrawal by Israel and a ceasefire must be urgently achieved.

He said that, from all accounts, some parts of the occupied territories faced a serious humanitarian crisis. There could be no justification for causing such acute crises, not even the right of self-defence. Innocent civilian lives were sacrosanct. Due respect for international law should be the norm of conduct. Humanitarian agencies should be allowed full access in compliance with international humanitarian principles. With each passing day, the situation was moving inexorably away from the vision of Israel and Palestine living peacefully as two States, within secure and recognized boundaries.

He, therefore, called for an immediate end to violence and the resumption of dialogue. Peace could only be crafted on the negotiating table and not on the treads of tanks. Resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) provided the [road map](#). The will must be demonstrated to move forward on the path charted by them. India's strong support for the Palestinian cause had been unwavering. It also supported the Quartet's Madrid joint statement of 10 April. Much hope had been pinned on the Quartet's efforts, yet no meaningful progress had been made on the urgently required steps.

IFTEKHAR AHMED CHOWDURY (Bangladesh) said that even as the Council was meeting this afternoon, a humanitarian tragedy of immense magnitude was unfolding in the West Bank. The continued perpetration of Israeli atrocities was compounding the pains of Palestine. Those pains were now unbearable. United States Secretary of State Powell had completed a crucial mission to the region. He had undertaken a massive effort to head off an escalation of the violence. The international community was in his deep debt. No genuinely earnest efforts in that regard would ever be in vain.

He said the Council's responsibility was now to complement that initiative. The Council should also support the Secretary-General's proposal for the deployment of a multinational force. It was imperative that the Council endorse the idea and authorize such a force. The robustness of the mandate of the force must match the challenges on the ground. Time was of the essence, he stressed. Any delay could lead to horrific consequences.

He said it was not just the Council's moral imperative to ensure that its resolutions were complied with; it was also a practical one. The Council must not only be credible, it must also appear to be credible. Should there be a discrepancy between its word and deed, its capacity to discharge Charter responsibilities could be questioned. The perception of the Council as the guardian of peace was a critical element of the generally held view of the United Nations as the guarantor of a better world for all.

MOHAMMED A. ALDOURI (Iraq) said that the Council was supposed to move spontaneously and without any request by anyone to deal with a blatant violation of the United Nations Charter and a threat to international peace and security. Should he speak of the number of crimes perpetrated against the Palestinians or of their nature? he asked. Or should he speak of all of them put together and in terms of violations of the Charter, international humanitarian law and international law, in general? He could also speak of the political dimensions of such crimes. What had been happening for some time had been a blatant violation of all moral values, laws, customs and covenants. Unfortunately, the Council had not recognized that fact.

He said it was time for the Council to rise to the level of the dangers threatening Palestine, the region and the entire world. It was time for it to hear the moans of the thousands of wounded, the screams of the thousands of children, and of those who had lost everything. It was time for the Council to impose, without selectivity or double standards, respect for the Charter and sanctions against those who violated it, be they great or small, particularly the rogue and oppressive Zionist entity. Were not the demands of the Palestinian people legitimate? he asked. All the Palestinian people wanted was to recover the land that had been usurped, defend their dignity and sovereignty, and establish an independent State on their land, in accordance with international law.

Those who attempted to overturn internationally accepted principles had labelled the Palestinians terrorists, in order to justify their own policy of hegemony and aggression, he said. The Council had so far been unable to stand on the right of that just cause because of a prior threat by a single State to resort to the veto, even before studying a draft resolution, which was already weak. What was happening in the Council was not an application of the rule of law, but a reflection of the principle of the rule of force. The complex crimes being committed had exceeded anything the world had ever seen, even in the time of the Nazis. The Iraqis watched the events in Palestine with wounded hearts.

Where was the embargo or economic sanctions? he asked. Were such measures to be used against some but not against others? It seemed that a decision had been taken in advance to exempt certain peoples from international law and the United Nations Charter. That fact had jeopardized the Council's credibility. The Zionist occupation had caused continuous and constant suffering for many decades. All attempts to find a solution to the Palestinian cause could not be successful unless an end was put to that hateful occupation.

ELFATIH MOHAMED AHMED ERWA (Sudan) said Israel's reaction to Council resolutions and to demands by the international community to stop its aggression against the Palestinian people was to increase the pressure. He supported the Secretary-General's proposal to dispatch a multinational force to Palestine and joined his voice to all those who had asked for an international inquiry into war crimes carried out by Israel. The genocide and the destruction carried out in the Jenin camp had been described as unimaginable. Such a crime against humanity could not remain unpunished.

The Council must act quickly to impose respect for its resolutions, he said. It was up to the Council to shoulder its responsibility and oblige Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and to put an end to prevention of transport of the wounded. The Israeli occupation forces acted as if they were above the law. They were encouraged by the fact that the Council did not take action under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

FAWZI BIN ABDUL MAJEED SHOBOKSHI (Saudi Arabia) said the issues surrounding the Palestinian question had entered a serious stage, the negative effects of which might not be confined to the occupied territories. Indeed, that was the aim of Israel as it attempted to push the entire Middle East region into chaos. The destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure, the killing of innocent civilians, the occupation of holy places and other atrocities bespoke an endeavour to transform Palestinians into a group of backward people living in fear, without history or culture. Prime Minister Sharon claimed that the attack of the Israeli forces on the occupied Palestinian territories aimed to put an end to what he called terrorism. However, the struggle for self-determination was a national right recognized by all.

How could Mr. Sharon say he wanted to put an end to the Palestinian popular resistance when all he had really done was spread death and destruction? he asked. Under the pretext that Israel was preventing terrorist activity perpetrated against Israel, Mr. Sharon had thought nothing of ending the stirrings of a movement towards peace in the region by continuing expansionist activities, imposing hunger and escalating Israeli military offensives. The Israeli Government had made it a priority to destroy the very foundations of a Palestinian State, including attacking Palestinian ministries and government departments and bombarding power and water stations.

No sooner had the Israeli Prime Minister been named to his post than he had begun to implement a vast plan of destruction, including the destruction of refugee camps and Palestinian infrastructure. How could the wholesale shedding of Palestinian blood ever put an end to the violence or Palestinian resistance? he asked. Could the Palestinians ever forget their parents and relatives who had been killed or buried alive? Could they adhere to a culture based on killing and subjugation? The horrible crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces were a plot to humiliate the Palestinian people and force them to avenge themselves.

Israel was perpetrating official terrorism -- in the occupied territories as well as in Lebanon and Tunisia -- right before the very eyes of the

international community, he said. If their continued massacres and other crimes against humanity were not considered terrorism, what was terrorism? Israel's non-compliance with relevant Council resolutions reflected its contempt for international legitimacy. That made it incumbent on the Council to call for the immediate cessation of violence and withdrawal from all illegally occupied territories. It was time for the international community to assume its responsibility to protect the people in the occupied territories.

He said a political settlement should be found so that the Palestinian people could achieve their legitimate rights. The international community should ensure the deployment of a multinational force to the region that could create the necessary climate for resuming negotiations. He noted the Saudi peace initiative tabled by Prince Abdullah at the recent Beirut Summit. That initiative had been widely welcomed by the international community and the Council, as its principles were in keeping with broader efforts to bring the region out of violence in such a way that would ensure peace and security for all.

JAMAL NASSIR AL-BADER ([Qatar](#)) said that everyone understood the dangerous nature of the situation in the Palestinian territories since the latest campaign of force by the Israeli troops. Media reports had provided clear-cut evidence of the violations by Israeli troops, which had pursued their savage operation to liquidate the Palestinian population, particularly in Jenin. There, the Israeli forces were doing everything to hide the inhuman nature of their crimes, but the coming days would reveal their true dimension. Those crimes would be added to the record.

Indeed, he said, Israeli activities were State terrorism designed to eliminate the Palestinian presence. They were also war crimes perpetrated against innocent civilians and in a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. He called on the Council to compel Israel to comply with its resolutions. It was up to Israel to terminate its occupation of the Arab and Palestinian occupied territories. United States efforts to narrow the gap between the parties had been praiseworthy, but an international force was needed to protect the Palestinians.

ABDULAZIZ NASSER AL-SHAMSI ([United Arab Emirates](#)) said that despite frequent emergency meetings of the Council and the important resolutions adopted, and despite the appeals of the Quartet which had called upon Israel to withdraw without condition from all areas it had reoccupied, Israeli defiance continued. What had been perpetrated by the occupying forces, such as destruction of houses with women and children inside, was but one chapter in all the war crimes committed by Ariel Sharon, acts which were in flagrant defiance of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

His Government had had great hopes for the mission of United States Secretary of State Powell to the region, but was distressed at the failure of that mission, because of Israeli intransigence and refusal to implement Council resolution 1402 (2002). That constituted a serious blow to the efforts to solve the Palestinian issue and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, without which there would be no lasting and just peace.

The Council must implement its genuine role and take measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to oblige Israel to comply with Council resolutions and to withdraw from the reoccupied territories. Israel must stop preventing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to reach thousands of victims. He welcomed the initiative of the Council to dispatch a multinational force to the territories. He called on the Council to also send a fact-finding mission to investigate crimes committed in the territories. Renewing his full support for all forms of struggle by the Palestinian people against the illegal occupation, he called on the international community and especially the Council and the Quartet members to enhance political and financial support for the Palestinian people.

PAUL HEINBECKER ([Canada](#)) said that the Council had already laid down the fundamental conditions to enable the parties to retreat. The international community had spoken unanimously, yet the conflict was continuing and the number of victims was growing, while hopes for a lasting peace were receding. The many proposals were all based on the principle of land for peace. Obviously, the two sides could not realize the vision of living side by side in peace on their own. That could only be made a reality by the full and active participation of the international community, including on the ground.

He said that the conflict had implications that went well beyond the Middle East. The Secretary-General had offered a bold and courageous view on the way forward, requiring the sustained presence of parties both inside and outside the region. The international community must collectively help the parties halt the fighting once and for all. The protection of Israeli and Palestinian people must be at the centre of any calculations for peace. The destruction of hope must stop; the horrific suicide bombings and the devastation in Jenin and elsewhere had led deeper into the vortex of hate and despair.

He said the way out of the crisis existed in resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). It also existed in the unique authority of the Secretary-General, in the United States Government behind its Secretary of State, and in the constructive engagement of countries in the region. Taken together, the components of peace were "almost all there". Canada had been urging the parties to create an environment where a third-party presence could play a constructive role. If asked, Canada was prepared to participate in such a presence. What was lacking was a demonstrable commitment to peace by both sides. Both must comply with the Council's resolutions.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, he said that the Council had passed two resolutions to protect civilians in armed conflicts. Those were not elective prescriptions or mere guidelines -- they clearly and forcefully reminded States of their obligations under international law. To the Palestinians, he reiterated his strongest condemnation of the attacks on civilians, including the suicide-bombing attacks, which were morally repugnant and strategically self-defeating. For its part, Israel must refrain from indiscriminate acts that harmed civilians. The Israeli Government must ensure that its forces cooperated with international humanitarian organizations to aid the victims, including in Jenin. Today, he noted, his country had announced an additional \$8 million in humanitarian assistance.

KOJI HANEDA ([Japan](#)) said that while the cycle of violence seemed to have eased for the time being, the situation on the ground unfortunately showed little sign of improvement. He was especially concerned at the humanitarian situation in Palestinian cities. The situation in the Jenin camp had been called "horrific" by the Secretary-General, he noted, calling upon Israel to grant international humanitarian agencies full and free access to Palestinian cities. He hoped that the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, would take place as planned.

He strongly supported the continued engagement by the United States and urged both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to respond positively to the efforts of the United States and to take decisive action to bring about a ceasefire and resume the peace process. He once again called upon both parties to implement relevant Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1402 (2002), immediately. He urged Israel to withdraw its troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah.

He had noted the anti-terrorism statement made by Chairman Arafat last Sunday, and sincerely hoped it would be followed through with concrete action. The situation along the "Blue Line" was another area of concern, he said. His Government called on all parties to respect the Blue Line and to show utmost restraint in order to avoid escalation of violence in that area.

MAKMUR WIDODO ([Indonesia](#)) said the fact that the Council was now convening its third open debate on the situation in the occupied territories this month attested to the gravity of the conditions there. In a matter of weeks, the Council had adopted three resolutions aimed at restoring peace in the region. But those resolutions remained unimplemented by Israel, and the conflict had worsened with unimagined consequences to the detriment of the Palestinian people and peace and stability in the region.

The dire situation continued despite the recent mission undertaken by United States Secretary of State Powell. What had come in the aftermath of that visit, aimed mainly at ensuring a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories, had been horrific reports of the situation in the Jenin refugee camp, namely, the massacre of a large number of civilians. He demanded that Israel immediately fulfil three requirements as set out by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East, Terje Roed Larsen: to immediately lift the curfew; to expand assistance to humanitarian workers; and to facilitate the delivery of food and water supplies to the suffering people in the occupied territories. As with any conflict, a civilized nation must comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law and allow agencies access to people in need. He demanded that Israel do so immediately.

Furthermore, he said, the siege on and incursions into Palestinian towns that continued unabated should cease immediately. That was most important as Israeli actions had stirred deep feelings of anger and mistrust in neighbouring countries and were now on the verge of embroiling the entire region in violence. In light of that, Indonesia would underscore the imperative need to deploy a multinational force in the occupied territories. Such an initiative would contribute to a secure environment and allow humanitarian assistance to reach those in need. He added that a military solution could not resolve the crisis. A solution to the problem could only be achieved following Israel's immediate withdrawal from all Palestinian occupied territories. Only then could a diplomatic solution be reached within the framework of Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace. Only then could the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, become a reality.

HADI NEJAD HOSSEINIAN ([Iran](#)) said that horrendous and horrific acts had been beamed in living rooms around the globe. The media and international representatives had aptly described the situation in Jenin and other West Bank towns in the wake of atrocities committed by the Israeli army. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the region had described the devastation left by the Israeli forces in Jenin as beyond belief. It was all the more criminal to deny access of rescue emergency teams for 11 full days. It was becoming clear that a massacre had taken place there.

He said it was morally repugnant to call the main criminal figure behind those crimes "a man of peace". The code of conduct in war and international humanitarian law had been blatantly violated. Those behind the devastation in Jenin were war criminals. Those who stood in the way of bringing them to justice would be remembered by history. There could be no justification for subjecting an entire civilian population to collective punishment.

In Afghanistan, the international community was dealing with just two groups, the Taliban and Al Qaeda, which had occupied the country, repressed its people, and turned the land into a launching pad for terrorism, he said. In Palestine, a whole nation was either forced to live in exile or taken hostage by Israelis and had been systematically brutalized for decades. The Afghans who had fought occupation in the 1980s had been dubbed freedom fighters and had been assisted by the international community. Those who now continued to fight comparable occupation in the Middle East were also freedom fighters and not terrorists, and should also be assisted by the international community.

He said that what was happening in Jenin and elsewhere was part of a well-planned scheme by Israelis to tear down the Palestinian institutional capacity, destroy political and economic institutions with a view to taking them back to "square one". The Council should put an end to the contempt of the Israeli regime to its resolutions. Weeks after the adoption of 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), the Israelis continued to flout them. Also, an international inquiry should be mandated to investigate events in Jenin and elsewhere. Those who ordered and committed war crimes against civilians should be brought to justice. The Council had done it in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia; why not in Palestine? he said. Deployed earlier, a multinational force could have averted violence and saved many lives. An armed multinational force to implement Council decisions was now a must.

KIM YOUNG-MOK ([Republic of Korea](#)) reiterated his earlier call to the leadership of both parties to put an immediate end to the violence and to move promptly towards dialogue and negotiations for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. He welcomed the visit of United States Secretary of State Colin Powell to the region and efforts of the Quartet and others to break the cycle of violence.

He was particularly concerned, he said, about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, in particular in the Jenin refugee camp. International relief workers should be guaranteed access to provide relief to affected civilians. He called upon the responsible parties to respect international humanitarian law and to exercise maximum restraint. He also called for the full and immediate implementation of Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), in particular the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities.

He commended the Secretary-General's efforts to bring peace to the region and believed that his proposal to send a multinational force merited serious and careful consideration by all Member States of the United Nations.

MAHFOUDH OULD DEDDACH ([Mauritania](#)) said that once again the Council was meeting to discuss the situation resulting from the reoccupation of Palestinian territories by Israel in blatant contravention of agreements it had made. The continued incapacity of the Council to adequately address that issue was inexplicable. The Council could no longer brook blatant violations of humanitarian law and the killing of innocent women, children and elderly people. Like most of the international community, Mauritania had hoped something positive would come out of the recent visit to the region by Colin Powell. Sadly, that visit had only been followed by more violence and killing of Palestinian people.

He said that several conditions must be met immediately, including the deployment of an international fact-finding mission to the Palestinian occupied territories, particularly to the Jenin refugee camp, and a call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied territories. The access of humanitarian organizations to the region must be ensured, and an international force must be sent in order to protect the Palestinian people. Finally, Yasser Arafat's freedom of movement must be reinstated so that he could continue his duties in the interest of the Palestinian people and in the

interest of peace and security in the region.

MOHAMMED ABDULLAH SALIM AL-SAMEEN (Oman) said that the Council had been meeting almost continuously during the past month to discuss the situation in the occupied territories. It had called upon Israel to withdraw its forces from the Palestinian territories, which it had reoccupied. Regrettably, Israel had not complied with those calls. Instead, it had caused further destruction. Moreover, it had not allowed international organizations to bury the dead or help the wounded. That was Israel's reply to the Council's resolutions. He, therefore, wondered about the next step to be taken by the Council.

He called on the Council to live up to its responsibility and deal firmly and seriously with the State which had totally defied its resolutions and which was acting as if it was above the law. He fully understood the political and moral responsibility of the Council. Every single member had a responsibility to preserve international peace and security. The Council must adopt practical measures to make Israel comply with the resolutions. He called upon the States sponsoring the peace process and the Council to fight against State terrorism perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces.

The Council should approve an international committee immediately to investigate the genocide and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Israeli army, he said. What was happening today in Jenin and Bethlehem, and elsewhere in the West Bank, resembled the situation in Bosnia, in which so-called safe areas had been violated by those who believed in murder to settle conflicts. He was amazed that some circles were calling upon the besieged Palestinian President to put a stop to the so-called terrorist acts and upon the Palestinians to effect a ceasefire. Such calls provided Israel with a pretext to pursue its criminal acts.

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