



# Press Release

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## **ASSEMBLY IS TOLD WORLD COMMUNITY MUST WORK HARDER FOR ISRAELI**

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORIES, CREATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE**

#### **Debate Begins on 'Question of Palestine': Israeli Delegate Says End of Terrorism Must be Price of Political Process, Not Its Reward**

The international community must work harder to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories and the establishment of a Palestinian State, the General Assembly was told this afternoon, as it began its discussion of the question of Palestine.

The current United States administration, stated the Observer for Palestine, had frozen its efforts in the peace process. Thus, the brutal and unbridled campaign against the Palestinian people continued. The Israeli Government, through its actions, had destroyed all prospects for peace and declared all accords null and void. It had denied the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination, and destroyed Palestinian infrastructures.

He added that a just and comprehensive peace must be based on the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on the territories of the pre-4 June 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital, the return of refugees and the removal of Israeli settlements. That historical responsibility was the responsibility of the United Nations and the international community.

The representative of Israel said his country had accepted the vision of peace involving two States living side by side in peace and security. But all those formulae were destined to failure if they were not rooted in the absolute rejection of terrorism and the adoption of a clear policy of reconciliation and coexistence.

Efforts to bring peace to the Middle East must consider the end of terrorism as the price of political progress, not as its reward, he added. Failing to do so would convince Palestinian terrorists that their efforts to achieve political gains through indiscriminate violence had borne fruit. That was a clear prescription for more terrorism, not only in the Middle East, but also around the world.

Speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the representative of Senegal said the continued occupation of Palestinian lands was the core problem that needed to be addressed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. In this respect the "across-the-board" acknowledgement of an arrangement to provide for two States — Israel and Palestine — coexisting in peace, within secure and recognized borders, reflected some progress.

Saying he supported the Arab peace initiative and the work of the Quartet in elaborating a "[road map](#)" for the transition to a Palestinian State by 2005, he said he anticipated a comprehensive plan, with specific benchmarks and a strict timetable, to be endorsed by the Security Council and strictly adhered to by the parties.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated States, Denmark's representative said a clear political perspective was needed to ease tensions and rekindle hopes for a peaceful solution. The European Union remained committed to continue the work within the Quartet the United Nations, the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union on a concrete, three-phased road map towards a final Israeli-Palestinian settlement within three years. She called on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to work with the Quartet on the road map.

The representative of Senegal also introduced the four draft resolutions before the Assembly. The report of the Committee was presented by Malta's representative, in his capacity as Rapporteur of the Committee.

Statements were also made by the representatives of Egypt, Sudan, Iran, Algeria, Pakistan, Bahrain, China, Malaysia, Madagascar and Cuba.

The Assembly will meet again at 10 a.m. on Monday, 2 December, to continue its discussion of the question of Palestine.

## Background

The General Assembly met this afternoon to consider the question of Palestine.

According to the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document [A/57/35](#)), the greatest concern of the Committee since its last report remained the deplorable and increasingly dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee reiterates that the continuing Israeli occupation remains at the core of the conflict and must be addressed without further delay. At the same time, it unreservedly condemns all acts of violence against civilians, from whatever quarter. Through its activities, the Committee will continue to contribute to international efforts at bringing peace to the region.

The Committee considers that its programme of meetings in various regions continues to play a useful role in heightening international awareness of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, states the report. It helps to promote a constructive analysis and discussion of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and to mobilize international assistance.

In its programme of work for the next year, the Committee will strive to involve to a greater extent other sectors of civil society, such as academic institutions and think tanks, parliamentarians and the media. Its cooperation with the wide network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the question of Palestine will be intensified on the basis of the new guidelines for accredited organizations. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme, with a view to making it more responsive to developments on the ground and in the peace process.

It will focus its work in the next year on the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, on international initiatives aimed at resolving the question of Palestine and the role of the United Nations therein, and on international assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee invites the Assembly, once again, to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

The report of the Secretary-General on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (document [A/57/621-S/2002/1268](#)) contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to revive the peace process with a view to achieving a peaceful solution. Over the past year, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has deteriorated further, according to the report, eroding many of the achievements of the peace process. The ongoing cycle of violence and retaliation has further inflamed political tensions and caused a significant death toll on both sides. The international community, united in its support for the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security, has continued to develop initiatives aimed at stopping the violence and bringing the parties back to the negotiating table.

For its part, the report states, the United Nations will continue to support the resumption of a meaningful peace process and will remain at the forefront of efforts to alleviate the severe economic and social hardships of the Palestinian people. The Secretary-General calls on the international community to provide the necessary resources in support of United Nations programmes to address the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, and especially to provide adequate funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), so that it can continue to deliver the necessary services to Palestinian refugees.

The Assembly also had a number of draft resolutions for its consideration. The text on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document [A/57/L.34](#)) would have the Assembly request the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people. It would have the Assembly authorize the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its next session and thereafter.

By the terms of the draft resolution on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (document [A/57/L.35](#)), the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continue to carry out its programme of work, in consultation with the Committee, including and in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.

A draft resolution on the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (document [A/57/L.36](#)) would have the Assembly request the Department of Public Information (DPI), in coordination with the Committee to continue – with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine – its special information programme for the biennium 2002-2003. Among other things, that included the dissemination of information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports on the work carried out by the relevant United Nations agencies, and organizing and promoting fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including the territory under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority and the occupied territory.

A draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (document [A/57/L.37](#)) would have the Assembly urge Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period, to help alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, rebuild the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions. It would also call on the concerned parties, the Quartet and other interested parties to exert all efforts and initiatives necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, and to ensure the successful and speedy resumption of the peace process and the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement.

## Statements

PAPA LOUIS FALL ( [Senegal](#) ), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, introduced the four draft resolutions before the Assembly and said that Israel continued to conduct incursions and reoccupy Palestinian population centres, imposing blockades and curfews and stifling economic activity. This was against all agreements reached between the parties since 1993 and in disrespect of United

Nations resolutions and principles of international law.

Moreover, the access of humanitarian agencies to those in need was often hindered, while the Government of Israel subjected the entire Palestinian population to collective punishment in response to actions by Palestinian militants. Israel made unrealistic demands of the Palestinian Authority. It continued settlement activity, attempting to pre-empt the parameters of a final settlement by "enveloping" Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank through a security barrier it was now constructing.

He said his committee had always condemned all attacks against civilians, calling upon Israel to abide fully by its obligations, under the Fourth Geneva Convention, to end its illegal policies and practices, and to end the violence. Israel should withdraw from occupied Palestinian cities and return to positions held in late September 2000. Furthermore, Israel should transfer all withheld taxes and revenues to the Palestinian Authority and allow unhindered access to intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies.

However, the continued occupation of Palestinian lands was the core problem that needed to be addressed, he added, to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. In this respect, the "across-the-board acknowledgement" of an arrangement to provide for two States — Israel and Palestine — coexisting in peace within secure and recognized borders, reflected some progress. This vision had been affirmed in Security Council resolution [1397 \(2002\)](#) and would serve as the basis for settling the question of Palestine. In support of the Arab Peace initiative and the work of the "Quartet" (United Nations, United States, Russian Federation and the European Union) in elaborating a "road map" for the transition to a Palestinian State by 2005, he said he anticipated a comprehensive plan, with specific benchmarks and a strict timetable, to be endorsed by the Security Council and strictly adhered to by the parties.

It had always been the Committee's position, he concluded, that the United Nations should continue to exercise its permanent responsibility until the question of Palestine was resolved in a satisfactory manner. In that respect, the four draft resolutions outlined positions, mandates and programmes of special importance at the present critical stage. The General Assembly was called upon to express its support for those resolutions.

WALTER BALZAN ([Malta](#)), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, introduced the Committee's report (document [A/57/35](#)). He outlined its contents and said that the Committee unreservedly condemned all acts of violence against civilians, from whatever quarter. The United Nations should maintain its permanent responsibility for all aspects of the question of Palestine, but the Committee fully supported the role being played within the framework of the Quartet by the Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process.

He called on the donor community to help UNWRA overcome the present severe financial crisis, in order for it to continue its vital humanitarian work. The work of civil society organizations was also appreciated. He urged the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its annual training programme, which benefited the staff of the Palestinian Authority. The Committee, he stated, wanted all States to participate in the work for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

FAROUK KADDOUMI, Observer for [Palestine](#), said that the Israeli Government exercised State terrorism in the occupied Palestinian territories, exploiting the events of 11 September as a pretext for stepped-up assassinations and killings and the imposition of more blockades. Israel had divided Palestinian territory into 227 cantons that were totally separated from each other, in an area of less than 5,800 square kilometres. The United States was accepting those practices while the people and the nations of the world had condemned them.

The current United States administration had frozen its efforts in the peace process, he said. Therefore, the brutal and unbridled campaign against the Palestinian people continued. The Israeli Government, through its actions, had destroyed all prospects for peace and declared all accords null and void. It had denied the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. In addition, it had destroyed the infrastructures of Palestinian society.

Meanwhile, the Arabs had put forward an initiative for peace which the United States had welcomed. But Israel had rejected that initiative. He applauded international efforts that sought to draw up the parameters of a future peace process. The Quartet was formed on the understanding that peace should be reached based on the Arab peace initiative, the Madrid peace agreements, the principle of land-for-peace, and United Nations resolutions. A closer examination of the proposed "road map" would reveal its shortcomings, among which was its demand that the Palestinians take positive steps before the lifting of the Israeli siege. The "road map" did not reveal a sense of seriousness to deal with the question of Palestine.

The primary preoccupation of the United States, he said, was to deal with the problem of Iraq. It called on Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction — while Israel continued to possess such weapons, including nuclear weapons. The withdrawal of the Labour Party from the Israeli Government was proof of the extremism of the current Government. Interested States must work harder to ensure Israel's withdrawal and the establishment of a Palestinian State. A just and comprehensive peace must be based on the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on the territories of the pre-June 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital, the return of refugees and the removal of Israeli settlements. That historic responsibility was the responsibility of the United Nations and the international community.

AHMED ABLOUL GHEIT ([Egypt](#)) said that the situation on the ground in the occupied territories was worsening — a direct result of the occupation. Everyone had seen the Israeli Government's successive attempts to crush the will of the Palestinian resistance through such measures as extrajudicial killings and closing off or occupying Palestinian towns. However, the only way to put an end to the bloodletting in Palestinian territories and the deaths of Israeli citizens was to end the occupation and turn a new page in the history of relations between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

Since 1989, he said, successive Israeli Governments had fallen because they had not dealt successfully with the Palestinian people. If confrontation continued, it would only bring more pain, suffering and destruction to both sides. The international community must convince Israel that its use of blind force and the reoccupation of Palestinian towns would not lead to security, but to continued violence. Security for both sides would come from peace, which would come after Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

The Egyptian vision of how to foster peace, he said, included a more comprehensive approach to the security, humanitarian and political aspects of a settlement. Balanced, parallel action on all three of those elements was needed. Moreover, there needed to be total clarity about the final objective — the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem. That included the total withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and the establishment of good-neighbourly relations to ensure security, progress and prosperity for both parties.

OMER BASHIR MOHAMED MANIS ([Sudan](#)) said the question of Palestine was a priority issue for his country. It had implications for regional and world peace and its persistence had led to a continuing deterioration of the security situation in the area. During the Beirut Summit, there had been acceptance of the solution put forward by the Saudi Crown Prince, but Israel preferred not to participate in such activities and disregarded all proposed solutions.

Israel's expansionism, he stated, should be not only condemned, but subjected to pressure from all quarters, especially from the Security Council, in order to have the problem resolved. The international community had been complacent, allowing Israel to continue its barbarous acts without punishment. It had been benefiting from the silence of the international community. For peace to come about, there had to be Israeli withdrawal from all Arab lands. He called on Member States to ensure Israel's compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

JAVAD ZARIF ( [Iran](#) ) said his delegation was appalled by the continuation of the aggressive reoccupation of Palestinian cities and villages. Israel's illegal policy of collective punishment, which included restricted movement of people, goods and vehicles, had a devastating impact on the fragile Palestinian economy and ran counter to all civilized standards. Its policy of land confiscation for illegal settlements was the major source of conflict in the area. The number of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories had almost doubled since the start of the peace process in 1993. Such deceitful policies and practices had led to the collapse of the peace process and triggered the present uprisings.

He noted that more than a half a century after the adoption of General Assembly resolution [181 \(II\)](#), the Palestinian people were yet to exercise their right to self-determination. Even the Security Council, for obvious reasons, had failed to take any serious and tangible action in response to developments in the area, or even to implement its own modest and limited decisions. The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan was not very different. He warned that, without the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians, including their right to independent statehood, it would be impossible to arrive at a fair, just and lasting solution to the issue of the Middle East.

MOURAD BENMEHIDI ( [Algeria](#) ) said Israel's actions had totally wiped out the gains made since the launching of the Oslo process. The situation had never been as explosive and as perilous to peace and security in the region and the world as it was today. Israel was increasingly using its death machine to strangle the Palestinian people, continuing its settlement policy, and using its tanks and missiles against civilian populations.

Israel, he said, had deliberately turned its back on peace. While the Palestinians had courageously made a choice for peace, Israel had locked itself into a position of intransigence. Despite repeated appeals by the international community, particularly the Security Council, and calls for Israel to respect international law, Israel continued to trample underfoot international law, including humanitarian law.

Algeria had followed the deteriorating situation with great concern, he said. It condemned repeated attacks by Israeli forces on populations and property in the Palestinian territories. He urged the international community to provide the protection that the Palestinians needed through an adequate international presence. The Arab peace initiative had been widely supported on the international level. It was necessary to set forth a framework for negotiations, in order to arrive at a solution based on international law and the principle of land-for-peace. He reiterated his support for the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people.

MUNIR AKRAM ( [Pakistan](#) ) said in the Middle East a final settlement appeared to be even further away than a year ago. Israel's complete disregard for its obligations under international law was deplorable. The recent killings of Palestinian children and an UNRWA official must be strongly condemned. Israel's favoured mode of coercion and retaliation against the Palestinian population remained the destruction of houses and the uprooting of Palestinian families. Furthermore, Israel had violated the provisions of several international human rights instruments enjoining respect for the right to life and prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment.

The still ongoing establishment of Israeli settlements, he said, was a major reason for the derailment of the Oslo peace process. Israel's creeping colonization of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, excessive use of force, reoccupation of Palestinian territories and towns, wilful destruction of the Palestinian Authority's structures and disregard for international law and United Nations resolutions had combined to create an environment of insecurity, violence and virtual anarchy in the occupied territories.

Only by focusing on the occupation as the core of the problem, he added, could the tragedy of Palestine be understood and the principle of self-determination for the Palestinian people reaffirmed. Pakistan supported a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, encapsulated in the principle of land-for-peace and reflected in the Saudi Peace Plan endorsed by the Beirut-Arab Summit. It was vital to resume a political dialogue to implement that accepted framework for a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

MOHAMMED SALEH MOHAMMED SALEH ( [Bahrain](#) ) said that Israel, the occupying Power, continued its policy of aggression against the Palestinian people. It was still occupying Palestinian territories and other Arab territories seized in 1967. Successive Israeli Governments continued to practice settlement policies, in which they brought people from all over the world to replace expelled Palestinians. It continued its war crimes, crimes against humanity and State terrorism against the Palestinian people, who were suffering bitterly from Israeli practices. Israel was the only State in the world occupying territory through force, and the only colonial power in the world today.

Condemning all forms of terrorism, particularly State terrorism, he reiterated the need to distinguish between terrorism and the legitimate struggle against persecution. He condemned the massacres and extrajudicial killings of Palestinians and the confiscation and seizure of their property by Israel. The international community and the United Nations must, more than ever before, exert pressure on Israel to put an end to major violations of international law and return to the negotiating table. He reiterated his support for the Arab initiative for peace, given that it was an Arab invitation to peace and an Arab refusal of violence. Israel had refused to respond to that initiative, and insisted on a continued policy that could never lead to peace.

WANG YINGFAN ( [China](#) ) said the current conflict had caused a serious crisis for both sides and led to the stagnation, and reversal, of the Middle East peace process, thereby posing a threat to the stability of the entire region. Thus, the stability of the region had become a cause of great concern for the entire international community.

The question of Palestine, he said, needed to be resolved urgently, in keeping with the fundamental desires of the Israeli, Palestinian and all peoples of the region. As the largest and most authoritative international organization, the United Nations had made great progress in promoting the resumption of negotiations. China hoped the United Nations would play an even greater role.

The relevant Security Council resolutions and the principle of land-for-peace should remain the basis of negotiation, he added. Furthermore, the right of the Palestinian people to an independent State should be recognized. Opposed to both the use of excessive violence and blockades by Israel, as well as the series of suicide bombings targeting civilians, he noted that violence beget violence. It would not bring the desired peace and security. There was a need to adopt a series of effective measures, relative to the armed conflict, to break the cycle of violence and to work with the international community to promote a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East question.

HASMY AGAM ( [Malaysia](#) ) condemned the recent attack in Mombasa, Kenya, saying such acts of violence would serve only to heighten tensions between the two sides. Recent actions by the Israel Defence Forces in Jenin and Nablus had been classified by Amnesty International as grave

breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949 and were, in fact, war crimes.

The international community, he said, had expressed no outrage at those inhumane acts; instead there had been preoccupation with the prospects of military action against Iraq. Israeli occupation policies and practices created fertile breeding grounds for militancy and extremism, thereby further jeopardizing prospects for peace. What was needed was a strong interposing international protection mechanism to defuse the situation and instill confidence on both sides of the divide.

He feared Israeli settlement policies were destroying the territorial integrity of the occupied Palestinian territory and undermining the realization of a sovereign and viable Palestinian State. To bring an end to settlements, which had been condemned as illegal by United Nations resolutions, a robust and unambiguous message from the international community, especially from Israel's close friends and supporters, had to be communicated to that State, letting it know that such policies were shortsighted and not in its long-term interest.

If Israel were serious about peace with the Palestinians, he went on, there had to be the immediate cessation of settlements activities, and the dismantling of those already in existence. That approach would be a truly positive move towards easing the tension, and a concrete step towards the peaceful solution to the problem.

YEHUDA LANCERY ( [Israel](#) ) said that Israel's insistence on security was not some blind obsession, nor was it a mindless ritual. Security was the very essence of peace. It was not some commodity to be bartered and traded, to be bestowed and withdrawn, subject to the whims of the Palestinians. It must be the central pillar, the unalterable foundation, and the most integral stratum of any concept of peace. But in the more than two years since Palestinian terrorism became a daily reality for the people of Israel, and despite the sporadic condemnations by Chairman Arafat of certain acts of Palestinian terror, never had the Palestinian leadership taken any significant action to give substance to its rhetoric.

The basic concept of peace, he said, remained the one articulated by the Assembly more than half a century ago, and refined by the Security Council in resolutions 242 and 338. More recently, that vision was reaffirmed by President Bush's speech on 24 June, by Council resolution 1397, and by the "road map" now being formulated by the Quartet. Israel had accepted the vision of peace articulated by President Bush, which included two States living side by side in peace and security. But all those formulae were destined to failure if they were not rooted in the absolute rejection of the strategy of terrorism and the adoption of a clear policy of reconciliation and coexistence.

Efforts to bring peace to the Middle East must consider the end of terrorism as the price of political progress, not as its reward, he said. Failing to do so would convince Palestinian terrorists that their efforts to achieve political gains through indiscriminate violence had borne fruit. That was a clear prescription for more terrorism, not only in the Middle East, but also around the world. Such a misguided approach, suggesting the establishment of a Palestinian State as an inducement for the Palestinian leadership to crack down on terrorist organizations, was the surest guarantee that terrorism would continue to be the defining feature of Palestinian policy.

He said that as he drew near to the end of his term as Israel's Permanent Representative, he still believed in Palestinian-Israeli peace. Today, that peace seemed seriously at risk. And yet that peace would come because it drew its sustenance not only from political sources, but also the philosophical underpinning of the Oslo process, that of mutual recognition. At a time when Palestinians and Israelis were tearing each other apart, speaking of mutual recognition would seem utopian. Palestinians and Israelis could not begin their journey from mutual rejection to mutual recognition without there being some tragic occurrences. That was what was being seen today.

ZINA ANDRIANARIVELO-RAZAFY ( [Madagascar](#) ) said the hope that had sprung up recently in the region had been crushed. Both populations had been devastated by years of conflict and suspicion. The road of dialogue seemed hard, but it was the only road of hope for both sides. He appealed to both sides to refrain from activities that would heighten insecurity in the area. It was essential for compliance with United Nations resolutions, which would build trust between the two parties. He wanted to know how many more lives had to be lost before the way out was found. The goal of peace, as shown by the Oslo accords, was possible. Israel's aspirations were not incompatible with an independent Palestinian State.

Madagascar believed that the definitive solution to the problem would lead to peace and prosperity for all in the region. He called for international consensus on the emergence of a Palestinian State. Given the gravity of the situation, there could be no solution without inputs from the United Nations. It was necessary for compliance with its resolutions to be monitored, in order to bring an end to the situation, which had lasted too long. He was hopeful that the Quartet framework would facilitate the realization of peace and a lasting solution to the problem. The international community, he stated, must not shirk its duty to solve the problem.

BRUNO RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA ( [Cuba](#) ) said the crisis in the Palestinian territories had become ever more serious, with the number of dead and wounded doubling in the past year. Israel continued to have its armed forces raid territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority, and military occupations and closures happened every day. The violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people was the most flagrant, mass and systematic in the world today. Furthermore, repeated attacks against the Palestinian Authority's headquarters had become routine, while Palestinian Liberation Organization Chairman Yasir Arafat could not travel abroad, for fear of not being allowed to return.

Cuba regarded the heroic struggle of the Palestinians against the Israeli occupation as legitimate, he said. Cuba condemned suicide attacks against civilian victims, but it also objected to isolated actions being used to defend the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

The General Assembly should head the United Nations effort to resolve the conflict, he added, given the Security Council's inability to ensure that its binding resolutions were implemented. The worker from the UNRWA killed in Jenin recently was the third member of the UNRWA team to lose his life while in the course of his job. Today, there were 23 Palestinians – employed by UNRWA in the West Bank – being held by the Israeli authorities. Many had not been charged, yet when UNRWA officials asked for information on them, none was given. The spiral of violence, the illegal occupation and the despair of 4 million Palestinian refugees needed to end. Cuba condemned all acts of aggression and State terror by Israel, and urged all delegations present to vote in support of the four draft resolutions before the Assembly.

ELLEN MARGRETHE LØJ ( [Denmark](#) ), speaking for the European Union and associated States, said those countries strongly condemned violent attacks targeted at innocent civilians on either side, including the recent attacks of terror and violence. Force could not defeat force. It served only to undermine efforts to promote dialogue on security, reforms and a final settlement. The continuing cycle of violence must stop to avoid the almost daily loss of lives among the Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations.

She called on the Palestinian Authority to do all humanly possible to fight terrorist acts against Israel and bring the perpetrators, instigators and sponsors of terrorist acts to justice. Likewise, she called on Israel to stop the use of excessive force, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, deportations, demolition of houses and infrastructure and confiscation of property, and to bring to justice the guilty under due process of law.

More than ever, she said, a clear political perspective was needed to ease tensions and rekindle the hopes and aspirations of the peoples in the region

for a peaceful solution. At the international level, serious efforts had been undertaken to restart political talks on the basis of a concrete road map outlining the steps towards Palestinian statehood. Within the Middle East Quartet, the major international players had once again shown their commitment to try to broker a final settlement between the parties. The European Union remained committed to continue the work within the Quartet on a concrete, three-phased road map towards a final Israeli-Palestinian settlement within three years. She called on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to work actively with the Quartet on the road map.

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