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Committee on the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People
288th Meeting (PM)

PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE APPROVES ANNUAL REPORT, FORWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS

ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 30-year-old United Nations panel dealing with Palestinian rights today approved its draft report, which outlined its work for the past year and included recommendations on the Middle East peace process. The panel also heard an address from the newly appointed [Observer of Palestine](#), who discussed the latest developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People approved its draft annual report (document A/AC.183/2005/CRP.2), which would be forwarded to the General Assembly for its consideration during the sixtieth session. The report was introduced by Committee Rapporteur Victor Camilleri (Malta), who briefly highlighted details of each of its seven chapters.

Among the report's recommendations, Mr. Camilleri said, were to use Israel's recent withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the West Bank as an opportunity to revive negotiations within the framework of the Quartet-backed [Road Map](#) peace plan. The Committee expressed particular concern about Israel's plan to expand large settlement blocks in the West Bank, separating the southern and northern parts of the West Bank and isolating East Jerusalem.

Also, the Committee reiterated its position that the settlements and the wall built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, were contrary to international humanitarian law, the provisions of the Road Map, and numerous resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the Assembly since 1967.

The Committee also expressed its intention to address such issues as the need to end the occupation of all Palestinian land; efforts by the Palestinian Authority to rehabilitate the economy, especially in the Gaza Strip; the responsibility of all Governments to apply international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine; and the adverse consequences of Israel's settlement policy and construction of the wall.

He added that the Committee requested the continuance of publications and other informational activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, the annual training programme for Palestinian Authority staff, and the Department of Public Information's special information programme on the question of Palestine.

Updating the Committee on the latest developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and on the political process, Riyad Mansour, the new Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, said he was pleased to deliver his opening address as the panel was celebrating its thirtieth anniversary. On the Middle East, he said the Palestinian side considered the dismantling of illegal Israeli settlements in Gaza and parts of the West Bank to be an important step in the overall process towards ending Israeli occupation of the Territories.

However, he noted, the pull-out had been conceived and carried out unilaterally and left many issues open and unresolved, despite Palestinian efforts to join the negotiation process. Some of those issues included what would be done about the rubble and damaged infrastructure left behind, access to Gaza's sea port and allowing safe passage between Gaza and other areas. It was absolutely necessary to address those issues so that the peace process could move forward.

It was also critical to address the situation in the West Bank, he said, stressing that a permanent link and freedom of movement between the West Bank and Gaza was essential for changing the situation on the ground, chiefly because Gaza was isolated and could not be economically or politically viable on its own. The Israeli side must reaffirm its commitment to the Road Map. The Sharm el-Sheik understandings should also immediately be implemented, including, in particular, the withdrawal of Israeli forces to pre-September 2000 positions, he added.

He went on to say that Israel's continued building of illegal settlements and construction of the separation wall were of deep concern. If the activities continued, the two-State formula would be in grave danger of being undermined. Further, a shadow would ultimately be cast on the Gaza pullout and

the way forward might be hampered.

Regarding the General Assembly's tenth emergency session on illegal Israeli activities, Mr. Mansour said Israel's intransigence, its continued building of illegal settlements, and refusal to end construction of the wall or to dismantle its standing portions would lead the Palestinian Observer to request a resumption of that long-running meeting, with a view to adopting coercive measures to completely halt all illegal construction in the Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Committee Chairman Paul Badji (Senegal) summarized some of the activities that had taken place since the group's last meeting on 31 August. As part of the Committee's 2005 training programme for Palestinian Authority staff, he said two members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had begun their work with the Division for Palestinian Rights. For the current Assembly session, the two would be familiarizing themselves with the work of the United Nations and the Secretariat. Some 20 Palestinian Authority officers had been trained by the Committee.

The Chairman also reminded the Committee that the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would take place on Tuesday, 29 November, and requested that all members and observers of the Committee be represented at that meeting at the ambassadorial level.

In other business, Hamidon Ali (Malaysia), Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-aligned Movement, gave an update on his delegation's recent activities in New York. The Movement's foreign ministers had met on 20 September to express their support for the Palestinian people, as well as the need for the members of the Quartet to fulfil their responsibility to fully implement the Road Map.

Also, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement Committee on Palestine met on 19 September and agreed on several measures to move the peace process forward, including calling on the international community and the Quartet to make efforts to salvage the Road Map, and calling on Israel to comply with the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the separation wall, among other things.

The Committee will meet again at a date and time to be announced.

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