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ISRAEL APPEARS UNABLE, UNWILLING TO SHAKE OCCUPIER MENTALITY, PALESTINIAN OBSERVER

TELLS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, CALLING FOR SERIOUS COMMITMENT TO TWO-STATE SOLUTION

'Peace is Two-Way Street' Israel's Delegate Says, Urging Compromise, Direct Talks; Assembly's 'Destructive Rhetoric' Does Little to Bring Parties Together

Sixty-three years after the General Assembly's historic adoption in 1947 of resolution 181 (II), partitioning Palestine into two States – one Arab and one Jewish – the independence of the Palestinian Arab State continued to be unjustly obstructed and the rights of Palestinians “flagrantly denied”, the Permanent Observer of Palestine told the world body, as it considered that “painful and persistent” issue in the broader context of Middle East peace.

Indeed, Israel had proven it was “unable and unwilling to shake the mentality and behaviour of occupier and aggressor”, he said, and commit to international consensus on the two-State solution. Israel continued to use “arbitrary, irrational, fictitious and even racist pretexts to absolve itself of its legal responsibilities”, thereby exacerbating the situation on the ground.

For its part, the Palestinian leadership had repeatedly reaffirmed its readiness to resume negotiations in an environment that was actually conducive for achieving peace, he said, one in which actions contrary to peace were halted, including settlement activities. “Israel must be compelled to either choose the path of peace or to bear the responsibility for its obstruction,” he declared.

“Israel cannot reach this peace on its own,” said Israel's delegate later in the debate, stressing that his Government had long made clear it was necessary and possible to live in peace with its neighbours – and had proven that in peace respective treaties reached with Egypt and Jordan. Peace with the Palestinians could only be found through direct, bilateral negotiations that addressed the concerns of both sides. Any agreement must be based on principles of mutual recognition and security, with Palestinians abandoning their quest to “make this land theirs alone – both now and in the future”.

The international community must confront States that provided extensive support to terrorists in Gaza, he said, notably Iran, which continued to export violence and instability in the Middle East. He urged the Palestinian Authority to join Israel without preconditions in direct talks broken off two months ago. The Assembly had a choice: it could continue to adopt the same distorted narrative of Israel pursuing a political agenda, or it could take a more constructive approach, working to bring parties together to pursue peace, and recognizing that as the only way to truly support the fundamental rights of Palestinians.

On that point, Assembly President Joseph Deiss, said in opening remarks that the 192-member body had repeatedly stated that a solution in accordance with resolution 181 would be the most viable; one where Israelis and Palestinians lived alongside each other in peace and security within recognized borders. He reminded delegations that while they were addressing the “painful and persistent” question of Palestine, today was also the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. (Please See press release [GAPAL/1178](#)).

Honest and fair negotiations to resolve that question must be conducted, he said. At the same time, violent terrorist acts must cease; international law and United Nations resolutions must be observed; and all actions that could fuel a climate of suspicion must stop. “Without swift progress, the humanitarian, economic and security situation of the Palestinian people will continue to deteriorate,” he said. “The stakes are high, but there is no alternative to a peaceful solution to the situation. Our debate today must affirm our determination.”

Egypt's delegate, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, condemned Israel's persistent construction and expansion process in many settlements in the West Bank. He also noted alarm at persistent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, Islamic and Christian holy sites and worship places, as well as at Israel's violation of international law through labelling products from Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as “Made in Israel”. He called for a halt to “this illegal colonization enterprise”.

Throughout the half-day meeting, delegates pressed Israel and the Palestinians to persist in efforts to restore peace talks launched in September and currently stalled over the expiration of a moratorium on Jewish settlement construction in the West Bank. Some also urged those negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two States and stressed the crucial importance of the continuation of the Palestinian State-building process.

In other business, the Assembly President informed delegates that consideration of agenda item 32, on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict, scheduled for Thursday, 2 December, had been postponed.

Senegal's representative, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, introduced four draft resolutions related to the question of Palestine: "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" (document [A/65/L.14](#)); "the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat" (document [A/65/L.15](#)); "the Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the United Nations Department of Public Information" (document [A/65/L.16](#)); and "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine" (document [A/65/L.17](#)).

Also speaking today was the representative of Malta, as Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, who introduced the report on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People ([A/65/35](#)).

Libya's representative introduced a draft resolution entitled "the one State solution" (document [A/65/L.24](#)).

Also speaking today were the representatives of Belgium (on behalf of the European Union), United Arab Emirates, Syria, Indonesia, Yemen, Lebanon and Cuba.

The General Assembly will reconvene at 10 a.m. Tuesday, 30 November, to continue its consideration of the question of Palestine and situation in the Middle East.

Background

The General Assembly met today to begin two days of debate relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. For their discussion, delegations had before them several documents and draft resolutions, including the latest report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document A/65/35), which notes efforts to resume negotiations on all permanent status issues, a volatile situation on the ground throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the continued division between the political leadership in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Of special concern was the humanitarian situation in Gaza, which was exacerbated by Israel's continued imposition of a severe blockade on the territory. The blockade obstructed the movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian access and the import of materials for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza and other essential supplies.

The situation in the Gaza Strip was bleak, the report says, with 1.5 million inhabitants still suffering from the aftermath of the Israeli military assault of December 2008 – January 2009, an acute shortage of basic goods and services, including clean water, and economic activity stifled by the blockade. Throughout the year, Israel conducted military operations in the Gaza Strip, resulting in Palestinian casualties. This was met with resumed rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups in southern Israel. In addition, Israeli military incursions into West Bank population centres continued, as did the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the construction of the dividing wall.

Despite these challenges, says the report, the Palestinian Authority and the Committee made progress during the reporting period, particularly in economic development and State-building. The activities of the Committee and its Bureau during the year had focused on the need to end the Israeli occupation and establish a sovereign, independent Palestinian State on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee remained concerned about the stagnation of the political process, and in the report's conclusions, reiterates that Israel's "dangerous and provocative" policies in East Jerusalem were prone to spark negative reactions on the ground.

The Committee further condemned the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, the report notes. While welcoming the resumption of the direct negotiations between Israel and Palestinians, it also expressed regret at the non-extension of the Israeli moratorium on settlement construction, which called into question the continuation of the negotiations.

The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights would continue to generate heightened international awareness of the challenges for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. It would focus its international meetings and conferences in 2011 on widening international support for permanent status negotiations, and creating a favourable atmosphere for their conduct in good faith, among other activities. For its discussion on Palestine, the Assembly had before it the Secretary-General's report on peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (documents A/65/380-S/2010/484 and Add.1), which contains replies received from the parties concerned to notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of resolution 64/19 (2010). It also contains the Secretary-General's observations on the state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and international efforts to move the peace process forward.

In his observations, the Secretary-General notes efforts intensified during the September 2009 through August 2010 reporting period to resolve question of Palestine, but says unilateral actions and human rights violations continued to undermine diplomatic efforts, while the situation in Gaza remained unsustainable and the divide between Gaza and the West Bank continued to deepen.

Moreover, the "overall impasse" in diplomatic efforts from November 2009 to January 2010 was reflected in the frustrations and low confidence of the parties in the renewed peace process; disputes over the terms of reference for negotiations; Israel's continued creation of facts on the ground; tensions in Jerusalem and the West Bank and continued violence in Gaza.

The report details various visits by the Secretary-General during the reporting period to move the peace process forward, as well as meetings held to that end, most notably the 20 August call by the Middle East Quartet for parties to launch direct negotiations on 2 September to resolve all final status issues. The Secretary-General notes the tense situation in occupied East Jerusalem continued to impact the peace process and that he had expressed concern at house demolitions and settlement construction in that area. Disturbances around the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount also continued.

The Secretary-General urges support for the State-building agenda of the Palestinian Authority, and for Israel to do more to ease restrictions on movement and take steps to facilitate economic growth in the West Bank. While welcoming Israel's 20 November 2009 announcement of a 10-month restraint on new settlement construction, he said that that policy had fallen short of its Road Map commitments to freeze all settlement activity and dismantle outposts erected since March 2001. Moreover, he notes that the causes of violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were, among others, Israeli security operations; mistrust between the communities; retaliation against Palestinians following the implementation of the settlement restraint; and unilateral acts "deemed to be provocative".

Addressing the Gaza Strip, the Secretary-General says he witnessed the immense reconstruction needs and unsustainable nature of the situation there during his 21 March visit. Israel's announcement after the 31 May incident involving the Gaza-bound aid flotilla to ease the blockade on 20 June was welcomed. All crossings into Gaza should be urgently opened. As for the internal dynamics in Gaza, Hamas continued to strengthen control and deepen the rift with the West Bank. As such, he called on Hamas not to carry out illegal executions of prisoners without a transparent trial, as had happened on 15 April. He also called for the unconditional release of Israeli Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit.

"I remain convinced that direct and meaningful negotiations are the only avenue towards a comprehensive and sustainable solution that fulfils the aspirations of the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples," he says. In the days ahead, progress must be made at the negotiating table and on the ground to move towards an agreement on all core issues of the conflict. For talks to succeed, Israel should extend its moratorium on settlement construction in the West Bank beyond the 30 September 2010 deadline and expand its scope in East Jerusalem. Palestinians must maintain law and order, fight extremism and build strong, democratic institutions.

The Secretary-General's report on the situation in the Middle East (document A/65/379) contains replies received from Member States in response to the Secretary-General's 10 May 2010 note verbale concerning implementation of resolutions 64/20 (2009) on Jerusalem and 64/21 (2009) on the Syrian Golan.

Also taken up today were several draft resolutions, the first of which, on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document A/65/L.14), 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, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people.

Further, it would authorize the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. The Assembly would also request the Committee to continue to keep under review the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate; and that it continue to support and cooperate with relevant organizations and United Nations bodies.

Additionally, the Assembly would request the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee. It would invite all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks. It would request the Secretary-General to circulate the Committee's report to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, urging them to take the necessary action, and to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

The draft resolution on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (document A/65/L.15), would have the Assembly request the Division to continue to monitor developments relevant to the question of Palestine, organize international meetings and conferences and liaise and cooperate with civil society and parliamentarians. It would expand the "Question of Palestine" website and documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, disseminate publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, and enhance the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority in contribution to Palestinian capacity-building efforts.

The Division would also be requested to continue to organize an annual exhibit or cultural event to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November. The Assembly would request the Secretary-General to ensure continued cooperation of the United Nations entities with programme components addressing various aspects of the question of Palestine and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Assembly would further invite all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Division in the performance of its tasks.

The Assembly was also set to take up a draft text on the Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information (document A/65/L.16), by which it would request the Department to disseminate information on all United Nations activities relating to the question of Palestine and the peace process, including reports on the work carried out by relevant United Nations organizations, as well as on efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy regarding the peace process; to continue to issue, update and modernize publications and audio-visual materials on the various aspects of the question of Palestine; to expand that collection and to update public exhibits on the question of Palestine.

By other terms, the Assembly would request the Department to promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel; organize international, regional and national seminars for journalists aimed at sensitizing public opinion to the question of Palestine and the peace process, and at enhancing dialogue and understanding between Palestinians and Israelis.

Further, it would be requested to continue providing assistance to Palestinians in the field of media development, and notably to strengthen the annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists. Additionally, it would encourage the Department to engage with the media and civil society representatives, encouraging people-to-people dialogue and promoting peace and mutual understanding in the region.

By a draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (document A/65/L.17), the Assembly would reaffirm the illegality of Israeli actions intended at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called "E-1 plan". It would also reaffirm the illegality of other unilateral measures that are contrary to international law and endeavour to alter the character, status and demographic composition of the city and the territory as a whole, among them, Israel's construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem.

Further, the Assembly would express its deep concern at the continued Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, medical and humanitarian personnel and goods, continued establishment of checkpoints and imposition of a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which had created a humanitarian crisis. It also would express concern over the unlawful takeover of Palestinian Authority institutions in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, and call for the restoration of the situation to that which existed prior to that time, and for continued efforts by Egypt, the League of Arab States and other parties for the promotion of dialogue to achieve restoration of Palestinian national unity.

The Assembly would stress the need for advancing reconstruction in the Gaza Strip, including through completion of suspended projects managed by the United Nations; call on Israel to comply with its obligations under international law; and reiterate the demand for complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the Syrian Golan. Reaffirming its commitment to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on pre-1967 borders, the Assembly would stress the need for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

A draft text on Jerusalem (document A/65/L.18) would have the Assembly express its grave concern about Israel's continued illegal settlement activities, including the so-called "E-1 plan", construction of the wall in and around East Jerusalem, restrictions on access to and residence in East Jerusalem and isolation of the city from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It would express grave concern at continued Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes and eviction of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem, as well as about Israeli excavations undertaken in the Old City, including in and around religious sites.

By other terms, it would reiterate its determination that any Israeli actions to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on Jerusalem were illegal and, thus, null and void. Calling on Israel to immediately cease all such illegal and unilateral measures, it would stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to

the question of Jerusalem should take into account the legitimate concerns of the Palestinian and Israeli sides, and include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the holy places.

Also before the Assembly was a draft resolution on the Syrian Golan (document [A/65/L.19](#)), which would have it express grave concern over the halt in the peace process' Syrian track, and expressing hope that peace talks would soon resume, declare that Israel had failed to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and that Israel's 14 December 1981 decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Syrian Golan was null and void.

By other terms, the Assembly would determine that continued occupation of that area and its defacto annexation constituted a stumbling block to achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. It would call on Israel to resume talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, demand Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and call on the international community to exert all efforts to ensure a resumed peace process.

Statement by General Assembly President

JOSEPH DEISS, President of the General Assembly, said that while the world body was addressing the "painful and persistent" Question of Palestine, today was also the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. "As you know, 29 November is the day on which, in 1947, the General Assembly adopted resolution 181, which divided the territory, known by the name the 'mandate for Palestine', into two States; one Jewish, one Arab," he said.

"The General Assembly has repeatedly stated that it considers that a solution in accordance with resolution 181 would be the most viable – a solution where the Israelis and the Palestinians live alongside each other in peace and security within recognized borders. We must spare no effort in supporting both Israel and the Palestinian Authority in achieving a just and lasting solution, coming after decades of confrontation, conflict and violence," he said, stressing that after 63 years of suffering, "we must come together to begin a credible and sincere dialogue and seek the compromise that will lead us to a solution."

He urged moving beyond good intentions and get past deadlocks. Indeed, honest and fair negotiations must be conducted; violence and acts of terror must cease; international law and United Nations resolutions must be observed; and all actions that could worsen the situation and fuel a climate of suspicion and mistrust must stop. "The time has come to make peace and, in the short term, we must take steps to relieve the suffering of the Palestinian people," he said, noting that the Assembly had repeatedly expressed its concern at the humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

"Without swift progress, the humanitarian, economic and security situation of the Palestinian people will continue to deteriorate," he said, calling for swift provision of aid to alleviate their distress. "The stakes are high, but there is no alternative to a peaceful solution to the situation. Our debate today must affirm our determination."

Introduction of Drafts

ABDOU SALAM DIALLO (Senegal), the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, introduced four draft resolutions before the Assembly related to the question of Palestine. Stating that the Committee called on Israel to restore the moratorium on settlements in the region and to extend it indefinitely and apply it also to East Jerusalem, he added that the Committee was deeply alarmed by the unilateral measures aimed at "altering the political demographic and legal realities" in the city. In addition, the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, caused in particular by the Israeli economic blockade, continued to be a great source of concern to the Committee.

The Committee intended to continue playing a constructive role in support of the international community's efforts, aimed at brining about a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine through a two-State solution. In this regard, he said, three of the draft resolutions before the Assembly today were related to the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document A/65/L.14), the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat (document A/65/L.15), and the Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the United Nations Department of Public Information (document A/65/L.16). The fourth draft, Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (document A/65/L.17), reiterated the position of the General Assembly with regard to the essential elements of such a settlement and included references to the developments of the past year.

SAVOUR BORG (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, introduced the Committee's annual report (document A/65/35), whose chapters I through III covered the body's general perspective on events that had taken place during the year. In chapter IV, the situation relating to the question of Palestine, as monitored by the Committee, was reviewed, with the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations noted as an important development. That chapter also provided details on the situation on the ground, and daily difficulties faced by the population in the occupied territory, as a result of restrictions, illegal settlement activities and increased violence by Israeli settlers, among other things. Chapter V reviewed the Committee's actions, he said, including the Chairman's participation in relevant General Assembly and Security Council debates, as well as mandated activities carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights. He noted in that respect the International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace, held in Malta in February. Chapter VI provided an overview of work done by the Department of Public Information in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 64/18 (2009) and in the implementation of its Special Programme on the Question of Palestine. It cited "valuable" coverage provided by the Department over the year to raise awareness about that question, he added.

In chapter VI, the last section of the report, the Committee expressed its opposition to resumed illegal construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and, he said, its serious concern at the situation in Occupied East Jerusalem, including accelerated settlement construction, home demolition, revocation of residency rights, and eviction of Palestinian citizens, settler extremism and threats to the city's holy sites. It reiterated its condemnation of the continued Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and urged Israel to open all border crossings to that area. Acknowledging the value of internal investigations into the 2008-2009 Israeli military offensive against Gaza, as well as into the incident involving the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla" in May 2010, the Committee also called for an independent investigation into violations of international law and demanded follow-up action.

He said that in its report, the Committee also stressed the importance of resumed negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, based on relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. In that respect, continued international support, notably by the diplomatic Quartet on the Middle East peace process, was vital. Concerned that divisions among Palestinian factions profoundly affected legitimate aspirations for statehood, the Committee called for "invigorated efforts" by all such factions to reconcile their positions on the basis of prevailing consensus on the need to achieve the two-State solution. In 2011, the Committee would focus its programme of international meetings and conferences on widening international support for the permanent status negotiations and on contributing to the creation of a favourable atmosphere for their conduct, he added.

IBRAHIMO DABBASHI (Libya) introduced a draft resolution entitled "the one State solution" (document A/65/L.24), drawing attention to the need to resolve the question of Palestine, rather than pursuing a mirage: the dream of two States. Recounting history, he said that in 1917, the percentage of Jews in historical Palestine was 9 per cent. They had possessed 2.5 per cent of the Palestinian territories. In 1947, Jews compromised 32 per cent of the total population. General Assembly resolution 181 (1947) divided Palestine into two States, according 56 per cent of the territory to the Jewish minority and 44 per cent to Palestinian Arabs, who represented more than two-thirds of the population. In 1967, Israel waged war against Arab States and seized the rest of the historical Palestinian territory.

Today, 5 million Palestinians live in refugee camps, he said, most in neighbouring States. Israel had not allowed any of them to return, despite Assembly resolution 181 (1947). Palestinian leaders held more than 10 agreements with Israel dating from 1993, however Israel had yet to implement any of them. Rather, it had confiscated territories, demolished houses and deprived inhabitants of their basic necessities. Israel had seized 50 per cent of territory of the West Bank to

build 149 settlements, established special security areas and "natural reserves". The "racist" separation wall took 10 per cent of Palestinian territory.

"There is no room whatsoever to establish a Palestinian State side-by-side with a so-called Israel", he said. One study had concluded that Israel, since 1967, had become a "colonial project" based on the apartheid system of racial discrimination. Israel had refused to recognize Palestinians' rights and attempted to render its occupation legal. The two-State solution promoted by the United States had not been possible, due to Israeli intransigence. Another solution must be found that took into account the principles of justice.

With that in mind, he said the draft stemmed from the principles of the United Nations Charter and stressed the illegality of possessing territories by force. It showed the tragic consequences of Israel's policy of force and recognized that the present situation did not allow for the creation of two States. It outlined the Assembly's commitment to finding a lasting solution, especially regarding the rights of those born in the historical territory of Palestine to live there, recover their property and recover their rights, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, among others.

The text also affirmed that the time was right to find a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict that safeguarded the legitimate rights of both sides, he said. There was no other viable option other than creation of one State for both Jews and Palestinians, based on equal rights and obligations. The text before the Assembly invited all Member States to support such a solution.

RIYAD MANSOUR Permanent Observer of Palestine, noting that today marked sixty-three years since the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 181(II), said that the independence of the Palestinian Arab State continued to be unjustly obstructed and the rights of the Palestinian people continued to be "flagrantly denied and violated". More than half of the Palestinian population continued to live as refugees, with the majority still in the camps established to shelter them more than sixty years ago. Israel continued to deny the existence of the nation of Palestine and the rights of her people, including to self-determination and to return to their homes to live at peace with their neighbours.

Moreover, Israel continued to undermine all initiatives aimed at justly resolving the conflict according to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. He said the international community's inability to uphold the law in regard to that conflict and to enforce consequences on Israel for its defiance of the United Nations Charter and its legal obligations had had a disastrous impact on the Palestinian people - and the wider region - including by contributing to "vast suffering and loss" as well as to the imposition of a "constant state of crisis, instability and insecurity in the region."

In spite of international and regional efforts for peace during the recent period, including the efforts of the United States and other members of the Quartet - also comprising the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the United Nations - as well as the League of Arab States and others, the Israeli Government continued to prove that it was "unable and unwilling to shake the mentality and behaviour of occupier and aggressor" and to commit to the path of peace and the international consensus on the two-State solution. He said that Israel continued to use "arbitrary, irrational, fictitious and even racist pretexts to absolve itself of its legal responsibilities", thereby prolonging the conflict and further exacerbating the situation on the ground.

Israel's continued pursuit of its settlement colonization campaign throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory was in direct violation of international humanitarian law, he said. Since the expiration of the "moratorium" on settlement activities, such construction had intensified, in particular in East Jerusalem. The situation there, including in and around the Old City and the neighbourhoods of Silwan, Al-Bustan and Sheikh Jarrah, remained critical, as evidenced by the recent Israeli announcement of plans for the construction of yet another 1,300 settlement units in the illegal settlement of "Har Homa" on Palestinian land historically known as Jabal Abu Ghneim.

That campaign, he continued, was clearly intended to dramatically alter the demographic composition and Palestinian Arab character and identity of East Jerusalem, said the representative, and to physically isolate and sever the city from its natural Palestinian environs. Further, Palestinians in East Jerusalem continued to be subjected to the demolition of their homes, evictions, revocation of their residency rights and other provocations by Israeli settlers, Government officials and others. Settlers continued to terrorize and intimidate Palestinian civilians and to destroy their property. In that regard, he reiterated that a halt to all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, was essential for resumption of a credible peace process aimed at achieving a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

The situation in the Gaza Strip - where the continuing impact of Israel's blockade and the consequences of military aggression still affected every aspect of life - also remained critical. Palestine continued to call for the full lifting of the blockade in accordance with international law, Security Council resolution 1860(2009), and the Agreement on Movement and Access. He also reiterated his delegation's condemnation of Israel's attack of the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla" in May 2010, which was in violation of international law and which had impacted civilians onboard.

On behalf of the Palestinian people, he urged the international community to uphold its responsibilities regarding the question of Palestine. Serious efforts were needed, including by the Security Council, to uphold the Organization's permanent responsibility toward the question until it was justly resolved in all aspects. The political will and courage must be found to follow through on the legal positions taken, the principled declarations made, and the commitments pledged to uphold the law in all circumstances and to make peace a reality.

For its part, the Palestinian leadership had repeatedly reaffirmed its readiness to resume the negotiation process in an environment that was "actually conducive for achieving peace", namely, one in which actions contrary to peace were halted, including settlement activities. He said Israeli breaches of the law and contempt for the will of the international community must no longer be tolerated, and decalred: "Israel must be compelled to either choose the path of peace or to bear the responsibility for its obstruction."

MAGED ABDELAZIZ (Egypt), on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said the meeting today unfortunately came at a time where Israel continued to carry out illegal actions in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, aggravating the situation on the ground and undermining efforts to revive the political process towards a final solution. The Non-Aligned Movement condemned Israel's persistent construction and expansion process in many settlements in the West Bank. "The Occupying Power's blatant contempt of the unanimous position of the international community and its absolute disrespect of its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, has been more evident than ever since expiration of the date of the so-called 'partial moratorium' on settlement activities," he said.

He also noted alarm at the "continuous and persistent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, Islamic and Christian holy sites and worship places, uprooting thousands of olive trees, vandalism and theft of agricultural equipments and corps under the protection of Israeli forces". The Non-Aligned Movement also remained deeply concerned about Israel's violation of international law through labelling products from Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as "Made in Israel", and called for a halt to "this illegal colonization enterprise". Israel must also lift all checkpoints and roadblocks throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, he said, and comply fully with the ICJ Advisory Opinion while ceasing construction of its annexation wall, which severely impacted human rights and worsened humanitarian conditions.

The Non-Aligned Movement condemned the imprisonment of nearly 10,000 Palestinians by Israel, where ill-treatment and torture were widely used, and called for their immediate release. He also condemned Israel's illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip. While the Palestinian Authority had repeatedly affirmed its determination to pursue the path of peace and undertake all measures to ensure security, Israel continued to violate its legal obligations and blatantly impeded efforts to resume direct negotiations.

Indeed, Israel carried out a series of "unlawful, provocative measures that only inflame the situation, including repeated inflammatory remarks by Government officials and the racist bill recently passed by Israeli cabinet on the Jewish loyalty oath, in clear violation of the legal and religious freedoms of the Arab population

in Israel," he said. "Despite preaching about peace, Israel continues its occupation of the Arab lands occupied in 1967 and entrenching all obstacles that would prevent withdrawal and thus preventing reaching peace in the Middle East."

The international community must remain united in its demand that Israel respect its legal obligations as an occupying Power and cease its violations, which was imperative for achieving the two-State solution based on agreed terms of reference that would enable a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

JAN GRAULS ([Belgium](#)), in his statement on behalf of the European Union declared that there was no alternative to a negotiated two-State solution, and urged more efforts to overcome the current deadlock in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian side. Calling on all parties to seek earnestly for a satisfactory way to keep the negotiation process active and moving, and then to gather momentum, he recalled that settlements in occupied territory were illegal under international law, constituted an obstacle to peace and threatened to make a two-state solution impossible.

He reiterated the European Union's call on Israel to end all settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem, and stressed that if there was to be a genuine peace, a way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two States. The European Union continued to call for a complete end to all violence, in particular rocket fire and terrorist attacks. Continuing, he stressed the crucial importance of the continuation of the Palestinian State-building process, which the European Union would continue to actively support, including towards implementation of the Fayyad Plan. Political and financial support from the entire international community was essential, and the European Union urged those who had made financial commitments to deliver on their promises in that regard.

Specifically on Gaza, he called for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), the full respect of international humanitarian law and for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza including goods from the West Bank. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the Israeli Government's recently announced measures as an important step forward, he stated. Concluding, he reiterated his delegation's readiness to contribute substantially to the comprehensive and sustainable solution which was to be found, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

AHMED AL-JARMAN ([United Arab Emirates](#)), expressed disappointment that six decades after the Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 (1947), which divided Palestine into two States and led to the plight of Palestine in 1948, the matter remained unresolved and was going through a critical stage in spite of all international and regional sustained efforts made so far for its settlement. Those activities included the recent intensive efforts sponsored by the United States that had resulted in the resumption of direct talks between the Palestinian and Israeli sides after seven rounds of indirect talks.

While reaffirming the primary and joint responsibility of the United Nations and its specialized agencies towards resolving the question of Palestine, he demanded in particular the Security Council and the Quartet members to shoulder their responsibilities towards addressing the Israeli violations, and adopting procedures and concrete measures to pressure Israel and compel it to implement the relevant international resolutions.

He said while his country looked forward to seeing Israel abide by its recent decision to withdraw from the northern part of the Lebanese Al-Ghajar village in accordance with Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), he emphasized that a just, permanent and comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian question and the wider Middle East issue could be achieved only through a full and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the Palestinian and Arab territories it had occupied since 1947. In that regard, he expressed the hope that peace efforts currently under way were strengthened towards the reinvigoration of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations in the region, in fulfilment of commitments under international law and resolutions of international legitimacy and in accordance with the principle of land for peace based on 1967 borders and the Arab Peace Initiative, to achieve the systematic vision of establishing two States, Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure borders and mutual recognition.

BASHAR JA'AFARI ([Syrian Arab Republic](#)) said the international community must commit to support the Palestinian people amid their continued suffering resulting from the Israel's "racist" occupation, killing of women and children, collective punishment, inhuman blockage, building the separation wall and detention of thousands of people. In light of such tragedies - and of Israel's rejection of the international community's will - it was important that the United Nations fulfil its obligations related to Palestine through the enforcement of relevant resolutions, including, among others, resolution 181 of 1947. Syria wished to recall a 2009 text, which stressed the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent State on their national territory and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, from which they had been expelled.

The commitment of the United Nations to enforce such resolutions had "wavered", he continued, stressing that such irresolute behaviour sent the wrong message to Israel. Further, Israel spoke of peace with "hypocrisy", as it continued with its settlement policy, including the latest announcement to build more than 1,000 new units. He went on to spotlight Israel's activities in East Jerusalem, where the actions of the settlers were jeopardizing the very character and foundations of the historical city. Many international documents and inquiries, including the Goldstone Report, had remarked that Israel targeted innocent civilians and had characterized its acts as war crimes. The siege of the city of Gaza had affected countless lives, causing great human suffering, which had been condemned by the international community.

Nonetheless Israel persisted in its policy and had further attacked a flotilla carrying humanitarian aid in May 2010, killing nine people and injuring and detaining others, he said, adding that Israel had not presented any report on that episode to date. At a time where Arab States sought peace, Israel's practices had reached serious dimensions. The Syrian delegation called on the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to change its actions in the region in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

HASAN KLEIB ([Indonesia](#)) said the collective punishment of the Palestinian people was simply unjustifiable and should not stand. "The Israeli determination to continue such obnoxious policies as illegal settlements, construction of the separation wall and the restriction of the rights of the Palestinian people, is the greatest obstacle to the establishment of a physically viable, sovereign and independent Palestinian state, and thus to the achievement of peace," he said. Indonesia joined others keeping a close eye on the direct political negotiations which had resumed between Israel and the Palestinians last September, but it was greatly concerned about Israel's failure to extend the moratorium on settlement construction, as that was a burden that direct talks may not be able to contain. "Israel must avoid putting any obstacle to the achievement of peace. Israel must operate within the ambit of international law, not outside or above it," he said.

A truly comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East required a solution not only to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, but also positive movement towards real solutions on the Israel-Lebanon and Israel-Syria tracks. On the Israel-Lebanon track, much remained to be done to realize the goals of a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution envisioned by Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). Meanwhile, it was also obvious that negotiations on the Israel-Syria track required new vigour to be commenced. Indonesia was committed to efforts to find a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive settlement to the Israel-Palestine conflict, based on relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

ABDULLAH ALI FADHEL AL-SAUDI ([Yemen](#)) said it was a pleasure to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. That commemoration was a re-confirmation of the legitimacy of the Palestinian people and their right to resist occupation and establish a State on their own soil with Jerusalem as its capital. The tragic occupation, policy of isolation, siege and imposition of collective punishment of the Palestinian people ran against international law. All those practices by Israel would derail the peace process. He called on the United States Administration to persist in efforts to restore the peace talks, but he stressed that settlements in the occupied territories constituted a provocative action, while negotiations had reached an impasse and proved the intentions of the Israeli government were not in favour of comprehensive and just peace.

Comprehensive and just peace could not be achieved without Israeli withdrawal from territories it had occupied since 4 June 1967 he continued. The international community must undertake its responsibility to ensure the rights of the Palestinian people and reactivate peace negotiations and the peace process. He also called on the international community to take the necessary steps to remedy the situation in Gaza, which had been suffering from an inhuman and immoral siege for more than three years.

NAWAF SALAM ([Lebanon](#)) said that there was no doubt that the establishment of a Palestinian State on the territory in question was an inalienable right of the Palestinian people. His delegation supported the establishment of such a State in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and other related international agreements. However, it was necessary today to question the nature of the obstacles that still impeded the Palestinian people from achieving their rights in accordance with the United Nations Charter - which prohibited the use of force and military occupation in the seizing of territories - and with international law. Israel's persistence in armed aggression against Palestinian and Syrian territories violated such international agreements.

Further, the first Article of the Charter also allowed for the right of people to self-determination – a right that was also enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. He pointed out that the General Assembly in its relevant resolutions, had called for an end to colonialism and for the end of apartheid. In addition, the laws and procedures of the International Criminal Court described racial discrimination as a crime against humanity. In reports to the Human Rights Council, the perpetuation of the Israeli occupation had been likened to colonialism. Moreover, relevant Security Council resolutions considered that Israel's settlement policies "had no legal basis", constituting a serious impediment to peace in the Middle East.

Those resolutions, however, had not stopped Israel from expanding its settlements in the West Bank and other parts of the region. Those settlements had increased about 5 per cent yearly since 1990, he said, and highlighted Security Council resolution 252 (1968), among others, which also prohibited the seizing of territories by military force, and thus the actions of Israel in this regard were "null and void". Additionally, the International Court of Justice had considered that the Israeli-built wall in East Jerusalem as a violation of the rights of the Palestinian people. Building the wall and seizing the territories between it was prohibited, he added.

The fourth Geneva Convention prohibited the moving of people of an occupied territory, it also prohibited collective punishment. Further, it was the duty of an occupying State to spare no expense to provide civilians with medical and other supplies. Israel did not respect those international legal tenets. In fact, 79 per cent of inhabitants in the occupied West Bank were currently lacking in food. In that regard, the actions of Israel overall were recorded in many international reports, as well as the reports of international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations Fact-finding Mission in Gaza.

Additionally, Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) had called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Lebanese territories, but after four years Israel was still occupying several northern regions and had rejected Lebanese proposals for such withdrawal. In light of all the impediments that prevented the establishment of comprehensive peace in the region, there was no doubt that the best formula for supporting the Palestinian people was for the United Nations to push past its own lack of action on that matter.

PEDRO NUNEZ MOSQUERA ([Cuba](#)) aligning himself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said it was time to redouble efforts to end the injustice of the situation in Palestine. Cuba condemned the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel which remained the impediment to lasting peace in the Middle East. This year, the situation in the Occupied Territory, including East Jerusalem, continued to deteriorate as Israel continued to violate international law. More than half of the inhabitants of Gaza were under the age of 18, and interruption of their education because of the blockade had had a devastating effect. The "inhumane" blockade of Gaza had also limited the mobility of persons and goods, and Cuba condemned this aggressive policy which ignored repeated calls by the international community and resolutions. He called on Israel to immediately lift the blockade.

Unfortunately, he said, the Security Council remained unable to address the situation of the Palestinians because of double standards and the threat of veto by one of its permanent members. The occupying Power had maintained intensive colonization measures – 59 per cent of the dividing wall had already been built - and had continued to build that barrier in defiance of the International Court of Justice. In spite of the moratorium declared by the Israeli Government, settlement activities continued, leading to annexation of Palestinian land. In practical terms, those policies prevented the existence of a Palestinian State. Cuba would not rest until the Palestinian people exercised their inalienable rights, including sovereignty, based on 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, he said.

MERON REUBEN ([Israel](#)) said today's debate provided little help to the Palestinian people towards peace, prosperity, and self-determination in the context of a two-State solution. Year after year, the current debate offered "shallow support" for its stated purpose - it was clear that serious, direct negotiations were the fundamental road to security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

"Instead of working to bring the parties together in meaningful negotiations and preparing the Palestinians to make the tough choices that will be required to reach an agreement, this distinguished forum engages in the same ritual condemnation of Israel, feeding Palestinian notions of victimhood. So I say to my colleagues this afternoon: let us turn away from the destructive rhetoric that continues to characterize this day – and begin a new discussion that provides meaningful support for the Palestinian people," he said.

The modern State of Israel had made clear from its inception that it was both necessary and possible to live in peace with its neighbours. That was emphasized in its Declaration of Independence and had been proven through historic peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, but Israel could not reach peace on its own, he declared. Israel could only achieve peace with the Palestinians through compromise and direct, bilateral negotiations that addressed concerns of both sides, including mutual recognition and security.

"After generations of denying the Jewish peoples' historic connection to the land of Israel, the Palestinians must unambiguously abandon their quest to make this land their homeland alone – both now and in the future," he said. In a recent poll, he said, almost two-thirds of Palestinians had expressed their hope that eventually a single Palestinian State would emerge in the region, even if they supported a two-state solution in the short-term.

"To establish lasting peace, the Palestinian leadership must be clear about their ultimate aims. They must recognize Israel as the Jewish state for the Jewish people and turn away from messages of hatred and de-legitimization, in favour of educating future generations about peace and coexistence," he said. Any peace agreement must also address Israel's security concerns; practically every day, its civilian population was exposed to the serious threat of rocket and terror attacks from Palestinian militants, which were supported by Iran and Syria with training, financing and arms.

After Israel had dismantled all its settlements in the Gaza Strip, it received terrorism and rocket fire on its towns and communities in return, he said. Thousands of rockets had been launched from the Hamas-controlled area since 2001, with the majority coming since Israel had withdrawn in 2005. The ambiguity of Iran, which continued to export violence, hatred, and instability to the Middle East and beyond, needed to be addressed.

Throughout the past year, Israel had shown that it was willing to take bold measures to pursue peace. Indeed, it had helped encourage impressive growth in the Palestinian economy and removed hundreds of roadblocks and checkpoints in the West Bank. "In the Gaza Strip, we realized the restrictions imposed on the passage of civilian goods into the area, and expanded the inflow of materials available for projects under the supervision of international organizations, which provide humanitarian assistance for a Palestinian population that remains hostage to a hostile terrorist entity," he said.

He urged the Palestinian Authority to join Israel without preconditions in direct talks broken off two months ago. The Assembly had a choice: it could continue to adopt the same distorted narrative of Israel pursuing a political agenda, or it could take a more constructive approach, working to bring parties together to pursue peace, and recognizing that as the only way to truly support the fundamental rights of Palestinians.

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