



General Assembly GA/SPD/472

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Sixty-fifth General Assembly
Fourth Committee
24th Meeting (AM)

FOURTH COMMITTEE CONCLUDING MAIN PART OF SESSION, EXTENDS MANDATE OF PALESTINIAN

RELIEF AGENCY UNTIL 30 JUNE 2014, FORWARDS TOTAL OF 27 TEXTS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Recorded Votes Needed to Approve Package of Nine Drafts on Middle East Issues, Which Includes Demand for Immediate, Complete Halt to Israeli Settlement Activity

The General Assembly, gravely concerned by the critical humanitarian situation and socio-economic conditions of the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, and underlining the importance of emergency assistance and urgent reconstruction efforts, would decide to extend the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) until 30 June 2014, by one of nine draft texts approved today by the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization), as it concluded the bulk of its work for the main part of the session.

By a recorded vote of 163 in favour to 1 against (Israel), with 8 abstentions (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), that text would have the Assembly affirm the necessity of UNRWA's work and the importance of its unimpeded operation, and call upon all donors to continue to make the most generous efforts possible to meet the Agency's anticipated needs.

By the first of five draft resolutions on Israeli practices, the Assembly would deplore those policies and practices of Israel that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, and demand that Israel cooperate with the Special Committee in implementing its mandate. The Assembly would condemn and call for the immediate cessation of all illegal Israeli settlement activities and the construction of the wall, as well as the excessive and indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population, the destruction and confiscation of properties, measures of collective punishment, and the detention and imprisonment of thousands of civilians.

Broad support eluded the text, which was approved by a recorded vote of 87 in favour to 8 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 73 abstentions.

Four other drafts on Israeli practices — on the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israeli settlements, Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan — were also approved by recorded votes.

By the draft on the applicability of the Geneva Convention, the Assembly would demand that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Convention in the occupied Arab territories and comply scrupulously with that Convention's provisions. It was approved by a vote of 156 in favour to 9 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States), with 4 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia).

The Assembly would reiterate its demand for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activity, and demand that Israel comply with its legal obligations as set by the International Court of Justice, according to the draft on Israeli settlements. It was approved by a vote of 159 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 5 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Panama).

Calling on Israel to cease its imposition of prolonged closures and economic and movement restrictions, including those amounting to a blockade on the Gaza Strip, the Assembly would also urge Member States to continue to provide emergency assistance to the Palestinian people to alleviate the financial crisis and dire socio-economic and humanitarian situations they faced, particularly in the Gaza Strip. That draft was approved by a vote of 156 in favour to 9 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States), with 4 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia).

By a draft on the occupied Syrian Golan, the Assembly would call on Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and, in particular, to desist from the establishment of settlements. That text was approved by a recorded vote of 158 in favour to 1 against (Israel), with 10 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States).

According to one of the four draft resolutions on UNRWA, also approved by recorded votes, the Assembly would reaffirm the right of all persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities to return to their homes or former places of residence in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

That draft, by which the Assembly would also strongly appeal to all Governments, organizations and individuals to contribute generously to the Agency, was approved by a vote of 160 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 5 abstentions (Cameroon, Canada, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Liberia).

By a vote of 162 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 2 abstentions (Cameroon, Canada), the Assembly would urge all States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to increase their contributions to the Agency in order to address the serious financial constraints and underfunding, especially with respect to the Agency's regular budget deficit, noting that financial shortfalls have been exacerbated by the current humanitarian situation on the ground.

A draft on Palestine refugees' properties and revenues was approved by a vote of 160 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 4 abstentions (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia).

Making general statement on the package of resolutions were the representatives of Belgium on behalf of the European Union, Bolivia, Canada, Syria, Israel, and Lebanon.

Speaking in explanation of vote were the representatives of Australia, Iran, Syria, Panama, and Georgia.

The representative of Indonesia introduced the four draft resolutions contained in UNRWA's report. The representative of Cuba introduced the five draft resolutions on Israeli practices.

The representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine also spoke.

Committee Chairman Chitsaka Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe) delivered concluding remarks.

Background

The Committee met this morning to take action on all pending drafts before it, including four draft resolutions relating to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and five draft resolutions on the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

By draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.8](#), on assistance to Palestine refugees, the Committee would have the Assembly affirm the need to continue the Agency's work, as well as the importance of its unimpeded operation, pending the resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees. It would have the Assembly call on all donors to continue to make the most generous efforts possible to meet the Agency's anticipated needs, including with increased expenditures arising from the continuing deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian situation in the region.

By the terms of draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.9](#), on persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, the Committee would have the Assembly reaffirm the right of all persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities to return to their homes or former places of residence in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. It would endorse the efforts of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to provide humanitarian assistance on an emergency basis, and as a temporary measure to persons in the area who are currently displaced and in serious need of continued assistance. Further, it would have the Assembly strongly appeal to all Governments, organizations and individuals to contribute generously to the Agency, and to other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned.

By draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.10](#), on operations of UNRWA, the Committee would have the Assembly reaffirm that the Agency's functioning remains essential in all fields of operation and ask the Secretary-General to support the Agency's institutional strengthening through the provision of sufficient resources from the United Nations regular budget.

By further provisions, it would have the Assembly urge the Government of Israel to expeditiously reimburse the Agency for all transit charges incurred and other financial losses sustained as a result of delays and restrictions on movement and access imposed by Israel. It would call upon Israel particularly to cease obstructing the movement and access of the staff, vehicles and supplies of the Agency, and to fully lift the restrictions impeding the import of necessary construction materials and supplies for the reconstruction and repair of damaged or destroyed Agency facilities.

By draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.11](#), on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues, the Committee would have the Assembly reaffirm that the Palestine refugees were entitled to their property and to the income derived there from. It would also request the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps, in consultation with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, for the protection of Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel. It would also urge the Palestinian and Israeli sides, as agreed between them, to deal with the important issue of Palestine refugees' properties and revenues within the framework of the final status negotiations of the Middle East peace process.

The Committee was also set to take action on five draft resolutions contained in the report on the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

By draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.12](#) entitled Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Committee would have the Assembly reiterate its demand that Israel cooperate with the Special Committee in implementing its mandate, and deplore those policies and practices of Israel that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories. It would request the Special Committee to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It would also have the Special Committee consult with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as appropriate.

By the terms of draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.13](#) on the Applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories, the Committee would have the Assembly demand that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Convention in the occupied Arab territories and that it comply scrupulously with that Convention's provisions.

By draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.14](#) on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, the Committee would have the Assembly call on Israel to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, with respect to the alteration of the character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It would reiterate its demand for the immediate and complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activity, and demand that Israel comply with its legal obligations as set by the International Court of Justice. Further, it would reiterate its call for the prevention of all acts of violence and harassment by Israeli settlers, especially against Palestinian civilians and their properties and agricultural lands.

By draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.15](#) on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the Committee would have the Assembly condemn all acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians. The Assembly would call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its imposition of prolonged closures and economic and movement restrictions, including those amounting to a blockade on the Gaza Strip, and, in this regard, to fully implement the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, both of 15 November 2005. It would urge Member States to continue to provide emergency assistance to the Palestinian people to alleviate the financial crisis and dire socio-economic and humanitarian situations they faced, particularly in the Gaza Strip. It would reiterate its demand for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

Also by the text, the Assembly would call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, with respect to the alteration of the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. At the same time, it would express grave concern at the firing of rockets against Israeli civilian areas resulting in loss of life and injury.

According to draft resolution [A/C.4/65/L.16](#) on the occupied Syrian Golan, the Committee would have the Assembly call upon Israel to comply with the relevant resolutions on the occupied Syrian Golan, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981). It would also call on Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and, in particular, to desist from the establishment of settlements. Israel would further be called on to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and from its repressive measures against the population of the occupied Syrian Golan. It would call on Member States to not recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to above.

Introduction of Draft Resolutions

HASAN KLEIB (Indonesia) introduced four draft resolutions under agenda item 51: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The draft resolutions, he said, reaffirmed fundamental long-standing principles of the international community vis-à-vis the Palestinian refugees. For more than 62 years, the refugees had suffered from having been uprooted from their homeland, and UNRWA had provided essential care.

He said the drafts reaffirmed the rights of the Palestinian refugees to just compensation and return to their properties and to a dignified life, and the commitment to achieving a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (1948), an integral component of a just lasting solution. The resolutions also firmly conveyed the international community's commitment to alleviating the Palestinian plight, and they acknowledged the vital role of UNRWA in providing education, health, relief and social services and emergency assistance. They also reaffirmed support for the Agency's mandate and its efforts in all fields of operation.

While based on the resolutions adopted during previous sessions, the drafts had been updated to reflect the situation on the ground, including the hardships faced by the Palestinian refugees and the impediments to UNRWA operations, he noted. In that regard, while the resolutions could not fully convey the extent of the suffering of the refugees, he was certain they reflected the main issues accurately. The draft resolution, L.8, on assistance to Palestinian refugees, reaffirmed the core principles regarding the Palestinian refugees and UNRWA, recalled resolution 194 (III) (1948) and resolution 302 (IV) (1949) and stressed the imperative of resolving the Palestinian refugee problem in the interest of lasting peace. The operative paragraphs affirmed the need to continue UNRWA, pending the achievement of a just solution, and called upon donors to be as generous as possible. The text would have the Assembly renew the Agency's mandate until June 2014 and invite Kuwait to become a member of the Advisory Commission.

The Assembly would decide to extend the mandate of the Agency until 30 June 2014, without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11 of the General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

He said that the second draft, L.9, on persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, reaffirmed the right of persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities to return to their homes in the territories occupied by Israel and stressed the need for an accelerated return of the displaced persons, in compliance with the mechanism agreed upon by the parties. The third draft resolution, on UNRWA's operations (document A/C.4/62/L.10), addressed the main aspects of the Agency's operations and the difficulties it had faced during the reporting period. Those had included financial shortfalls, the classroom shortage in Gaza, and the ongoing imposition of restrictions on necessary materials.

The draft addressed the continuing needs of the refugees in all fields, he said. Due attention was given to the hardships and difficult socio-economic conditions that confronted the refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the prolonged Israeli blockade. The draft reaffirmed that the functioning of the Agency remained essential in all fields of operation and expressed appreciation to the Commissioner-General and staff of the Agency for their tireless efforts.

He then presented an oral amendment to operative 10 regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the management capacity of UNRWA. As the report was not finalized, that paragraph should be amended to read: "Looks forward to the transmittal of the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the management capacity of the Agency, as requested by the Working Group and as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/89".

The last draft, L.11, on Palestinian refugees' properties and their revenues, recalled resolutions 194 (III) and subsequent resolutions on the question, and also recalling the principle that no one should be arbitrarily deprived of his or her property, the draft reaffirmed the Palestine Arab refugees were entitled to their

property and income derived from it. The Secretary-General was requested to take all appropriate steps for the protection of Arab property. He expressed strong hope the draft resolutions would once again receive the overwhelming support they deserved, reflecting the abiding support for the important humanitarian work of UNRWA.

REBECA HERNÁNDEZ TOLEDANO (Cuba) said it was an honour to present the five resolutions under consideration under the theme The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

The Special Committee, she recalled, had reported that the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Syrian Golan heights and East Jerusalem continued unabated and had resulted in continued violations of human rights and international law. Specifically, there was great concern owing to the blockade, which led to other violations of all other human rights of the Palestinian people. The landscape of the other areas, such as East Jerusalem, required attention, especially due to settlement activity. That situation increased tensions and undermined a two-State solution, and thus, was the main obstacle to restarting the peace process. The draft resolutions pointed to a need to cease those practices in the Occupied Territory, and required compliance with relevant instruments to end the systematic violations of the Geneva Convention.

She said that the first text, on the Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli practices (document A/C.4/65/L.12), mentioned pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. It emphasized the need to end the Israeli occupation, which had begun in 1967, and it called for the continued investigation into human rights violations. The second draft, regarding the Applicability of the Geneva Convention (document A/C.4/65/L.13), showed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and called for Israel to respect the Convention.

The third draft resolution, she noted, on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan (document A/C.4/65/L.14), referenced resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council regarding illegal activities by Israel in the Palestinian Occupied Territory and Syrian Golan. It recognized the damages stemming from policies, including settlement activities, and expressed specific concern over settlement activity, including East Jerusalem, and the illegal construction of the separation wall. The draft reiterated the Assembly's request for the immediate cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and called in that regard for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Among other things, the text called for the prevention of provocation by Israeli colonialists against Palestinian civilians.

Introducing the draft resolution on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (document A/C.4/65/L.15), she said that text was focused on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed the applicability to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It also referred to resolutions of the Security Council, General Assembly, and Human Rights Council. She said the Israeli practices of collective punishment, detention and destruction had been carefully examined. The resolution expressed great concern over safety in Gaza, and the trauma and destruction of military operations between 2008 and 2009, as well as the serious violations of international humanitarian law. It urged Israel to stop its blockade and to allow accelerated reconstruction of Gaza.

The last draft resolution, on the occupied Syrian Golan (document A/C.4/65/L.16), exhorted Israel to comply with the relevant resolutions and to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and in particular to desist from the establishment of settlements. The draft resolution determined that all measures taken by Israel in order to change the legal nature or character were null and void. The text enjoyed broad support from almost all Member States, she said, adding that, on the co-sponsors' behalf, there was deep-seated hope that all Member States would endorse all resolutions that represented serious issues for the Palestinians and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories.

Action on Drafts

Following the introduction of the drafts, the Committee proceeded to take action on the four draft resolutions contained in UNRWA's report, and the five draft resolutions contained in the report on Israeli practices.

In a general statement before the vote, the representative of Belgium, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the Union believed the resolutions addressed a broad range of issues and important principles, and she encouraged further steps to streamline the resolutions relating to Palestine. The Union deemed it "indispensable" that both parties were calm and refrained from actions and rhetoric that would negatively affect the peace process, as it was necessary to create an environment conducive to a successful outcome.

The Committee then proceeded to take recorded votes on the four draft resolutions relating to UNRWA.

First, the draft text on assistance to Palestine refugees, L.8, was approved by a recorded vote of 163 in favour to 1 against (Israel), with 8 abstentions (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States).

Next, the text on persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, L.9, was approved by a vote of 160 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 5 abstentions (Cameroon, Canada, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Liberia).

Then, the draft resolution on UNRWA's operations, L.10, was approved by a recorded vote of 162 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 2 abstentions (Cameroon, Canada).

The text on Palestine refugees' properties and revenues, L.11, was approved by a vote of 160 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 4 abstentions (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia).

Speaking after the vote, the representative of Australia said his delegation had voted in favour of L.10 as it had done previously, because Australia strongly supported the work of UNRWA in providing humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. He welcomed the changes this year to the language of the resolution, but said his delegation would appreciate more on that front as it could be more balanced, such as with regard to the condemnation of Hamas' actions that deliberately endangered lives. He said Australia strongly supported Israel's right to self-defence, and reiterated support for the Agency and its staff to address the plight of the Palestinian refugees.

The Committee then proceeded to take action on the five draft resolutions relating to the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

Making a general statement before the vote, the representative of Bolivia said that the delegation would like to be included in the list of co-sponsors of L.16 on the occupied Syrian Golan.

Next, the draft text on the work of the Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices, L.12, was approved by a recorded vote of 87 in favour to 8 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 73 abstentions.

The draft text on the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories, L.13, was approved by a vote of 161 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 3 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo).

The draft text on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, L.14, was approved by a vote of 159 in favour to 6 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 5 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Panama).

Then, the draft resolution on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, L.15, was approved by a vote of 156 in favour to 9 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States), with 4 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia).

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution on the occupied Syrian Golan, L.16, approving it by a recorded vote of 158 in favour to 1 against (Israel), with 10 abstentions (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, United States).

Speaking in explanation of vote after the votes, the representative of Iran said his delegation had voted in favour of all draft resolutions relating to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices, in order to join other members of the Committee in showing sympathy and solidarity with the Palestinian people. He reiterated that his delegation would maintain its long-lasting position on the resolutions relating to the Palestinian issue. To the knowledge of all, Iran had been unwavering in its support for the Palestinian people's endeavours to attain their national goals, including full access to the right to self-determination. Iran continued to emphasize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, who had suffered from occupation and suppression for decades. He believed that the settlement of the Palestinian crisis was achievable only if the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine were recognized, supported and maintained. However, that issue had remained unsolved for more than six decades. A durable peace in Palestine was possible through justice and an end to discrimination and occupation, the return of all Palestinian refugees to their homeland, and the establishment of a State, with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Also speaking in explanation of vote after the votes, the representative of Syria said his delegation had voted in favour of resolutions L.12 and L.15, proceeding from Syria's belief in the justice of the cause of the Palestinian people and their legitimate struggle to be liberated from Israeli occupation and establish an independent State. Implementation of that goal was directly linked to compelling Israel to put an end to systematically violating the human rights of the Palestinian people, including violations through excessive use of force, collective punishment, and confiscation of land. He said those two resolutions included certain paragraphs that were inconsistent and did not fulfil certain aspirations. In particular, he wished to place on record a rejection of the suggestion in the ninth preambular paragraph of L.12 and preambular paragraph 20 of L.15, since those two paragraphs gave the impression of equality between the aggressor and the victim of aggression. That would convey an erroneous political message to the Israeli occupation authorities, he said.

He stressed that the fact that Israel occupied the Palestinian territory and not the other way around "was known to all". Israel had launched aggression against Gaza using internationally prohibited weapons to kill women, children, and the elderly, and not the other way around. Israel, the occupying Power, legitimized blind and unjust occupation of the Palestinian Territory, despite total international rejection of that irresponsible provocative policy. The distortion of facts was a denial of the rights under occupation — the rights to resist the occupier. Syria would never accept a transformation of that injustice into justice, or that murder triumph over justice and law. Rather, Syria would continue to reject any approach that equated the occupier and those struggling to end an occupation, because that approach was erroneous and contravened the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

The representative of Panama said the delegation had intended to vote against L.12, and would like the Committee to take note of that.

General Statements after Vote

FEDA ABDELHADY-NASSER, Representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, said her delegation wished to express its gratitude to all States that had voted in favour of the resolutions approved today. She expressed deep appreciation for the support of the resolutions and of the "principles and just positions" enshrined therein. She further appreciated the valuable support of the delegations of Indonesia and Cuba for introducing the drafts on behalf of the co-sponsors, as well as for the constructive manner in which the negotiations had been conducted by the European Union and its members.

It was a most critical junction on the long road to freedom for the Palestinians and for peace in the Middle East, she said. At the present critical time, upholding the rules and principles of international law and adherence to United Nations resolutions were of paramount importance, including through a commitment to a just solution to ease the agony of the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (1948), as well as strong support for UNRWA's mandate. Today, there had been clear reaffirmation of the commitment of ensuring respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people, which must be upheld under foreign occupation. The international community was clear in its calls for the cessation of Israeli aggressions in the occupied territories and for respect by Israel of its legal obligations, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention. The international community must not waver in those demands, and Israel's positions and actions must be changed. The occupying Power must heed those demands and allow efforts for a peace settlement to move forward, in order to bring about real change and create the right environment to bring about a final, just and lasting settlement, bringing peaceful coexistence to the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, and to the Middle East region as a whole.

CONRAD SHECK (Canada) said his delegation wished, once again, to point to the disproportionate focus placed on the situation in the Middle East in the Committee, which singled out an individual party as being at fault. That general practice continued, despite the welcome introduction in some instances of more "balanced language". Canada believed the resolutions and the debate on the Arab-Israeli issue in the United Nations General Assembly should be fair-minded, and above all, seek to contribute constructively to the goal of a negotiated two-State solution to the conflict. Long-standing positions had not changed, he said. Israel was bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention, and Canada maintained that Israeli settlements were a violation of that Convention. It had voted in favour of some of the resolutions, however, Canada continued to have concerns with some of the language, which his delegation believed was divisive, at a time when the parties should be brought back to negotiations.

He urged all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including protecting civilians. Canada demonstrated continuing commitment to the Palestinian refugees, and had supported UNRWA operations since 1950. The work of UNRWA was vital in meeting humanitarian needs in the region, however his delegation believed that some of the language in the resolutions did not serve to promote a peaceful solution, but focused blame solely on Israel without recognizing Israel's legitimate security concerns, or that the cause of the December 2008 conflict had been the rockets fired by Hamas. One-sided language did not belong in a resolution supporting the good work of UNRWA. Canada would continue to support the Committee in its efforts to help the people of Palestine, the only way to secure a peaceful future for the Middle East.

BASHAR JA'AFARI (Syria) thanked the delegations of Indonesia and Cuba for presenting the draft resolutions, and said the wide support had once again confirmed the international community's rejection of the occupation of the territory by force and the disregard of the rights of a people. The international community sent an unambiguous message to Israel, requesting it to end its occupation of all Arab occupied territories and to cease its violations of the Geneva Convention of 1949. Attempts by Israel, the occupying Power, to annex the occupied Syrian Golan and impose legal and administrative jurisdiction over it, and the expansion of settlement of those lands, as well as the apartheid practised against the citizens of the Golan, were null and void and had no legal effect in the view

of the international community. That confirmed Security Council resolution 479 (1981), which had been adopted unanimously. The violation by Israel of international law was dangerous, and there was no legal basis for occupying the Syrian Golan. But in a provocative manner, Israel had annexed the Syrian Golan.

He said that that provocative act was a reminder of what had happened at the beginning of the Second World War in Europe, when one aggressive country attacked another and annexed parts of its territory. By adopting the draft resolutions today, the Committee had confirmed the importance of the Special Committee on Israeli Practices, and called on all States to provide the necessary assistance to the Committee. The Special Committee represented the "eye" that revealed Israel's crimes to the international community. Any attempt to attack or weaken that Committee would only give Israel a cover to continue its settlement practices and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Syria always expressed its commitment to a comprehensive and just peace and accepted the Arab Peace Initiative. Syria extended its hand to peace, but Israel had disregarded it and continued its occupying practices in the occupied Arab territories.

Turning to the ongoing detention of 11,000 persons in the prisons of the occupying Power, he said those included hundreds who had been legally elected by the Palestinian people. The continued blockade against Gaza, despite all appeals by the international community to end it, persisted. All of those violations were documented in the Goldstone Report. The world was witnessing unabated settlement activities in the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem. The peace process could not be achieved by one party supporting peace, with the support of the international community, while another party tried its best to undermine the peace at all times. What was lacking in the peace process was an Israeli partner ready to achieve the peace process known to the international community.

He said his delegation was disheartened that some delegations had refrained from voting on some of the resolutions, and he called on them to join the international community by supporting those resolutions when they were submitted to the General Assembly in the coming days. Any hesitation in condemning the Israeli occupation and annexations would send the wrong message to those "outlaws", the Israelis, indicating that the rule of the jungle could replace international law and that those outlaws could go unpunished. Only Israel had voted against all the resolutions, which showed that it challenged international humanitarian law.

AMIR WEISSBROD (Israel) said his delegation had already expressed its position and did not want to repeat itself. However, in relation to what the Permanent Representative of Syria had said, he said that to hear lectures from a country that was delivering arms to terrorist organizations in Lebanon and the Gaza strip — such countries should look at themselves first instead of giving lectures, as its actions did not show any will for peace.

Mr. JAAFARI (Syria) said there was no other terrorism on the surface of the planet like the terrorism committed by Israel. He said that entity had been established on the basis of terrorism, and its terrorism — which had carried the names of gangs, terrorist gangs like Stern and Haganah — was then led by the heads of the Government of Israel, at a later stage. Those gangs committed aggression collectively against the Palestinian people in the 1940s and 1950s, and killed hundreds in collective massacres in regions of Palestine. The hands of the Israeli State terrorism extended to other Arab countries as well. That terrorism, committed collectively through massacres in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, had even reached Tunisia, the Sudan, and other regions of the world. That entity had no right to speak about law before its leaders and governors knew the meaning of law. Those were outlaws, and that was how they were treated by the international community, and the voting by majority against Israel today was just such a clear-cut example.

He said that the Israeli Government did not understand that their occupation of another's territory was rejected by international law, and the Geneva Convention of 1949 was "a documented thing". That was reflected by tens of reports prepared by United Nations experts, such as the Goldstone Report, making Israeli violations known to all, and embarrassing those closest to Israel. Israel had introduced nuclear weapons into the region and threatened to use them. It was Israel that "blackmailed its closest ally, the United States", in order to get the most concessions, to freeze settlements for several months only. That was a "big lie" because the settlements had never stopped, but rather had reached more advanced and dangerous dimensions, and that was before talking about the peace process. The leaders of Israel had not a single partner who believed in peace.

They were people who called for war, "war lovers", teachers of provocation; they oppressed others, they sent messages of apartheid and racism, he said. In the twenty-first century, they had asked for the establishment of a Jewish State that they said was an "oasis of peace in the Middle East". He asked what could be done regarding the hundreds of settlements in the occupied territories and he asked "isn't this terrorism?" He called on the representative of Israel to "keep silent" and to be ashamed of the policies of his countries and to expose them as they were.

Mr. WEISSBROD (Israel) said he did not wish to prolong the discussion, but remarked that the statement of the Syrian representative spoke for itself. Instead of supporting terror and giving weapons to Hamas and Hizbullah, they should show that they wanted peace. In that regard, the burden was on them.

Mr. JAAFARI (Syria) said he felt forced to teach the representative of Israel a lesson in history, because the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were struggling against a foreign occupier and they could not be in anyway terrorists, as they were struggling against Israeli State terrorism. Lebanese resistance was not terrorism, because it stood against Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories, and because Israel had committed aggression more than 10 times over the past 30 years. The Israeli State terrorism was the one that had to be questioned. The Palestinians were defending themselves against an occupier that had shown disregard for human dignity for decades. That was why there were tens of resolutions supported by the international community, and nobody could find one single draft resolution that supported the Israeli occupation.

He said that peace needed to be based on complete withdrawal of the complete occupied territory since 1967. Israel was fully exposed, vertically and horizontally, and there was no way that its "lies" should be accepted by anybody. There was "only one terrorism" in the Middle East, and it was the Israeli State terrorism.

MAJDI RAMADAN (Lebanon) said the result of the voting today was the best answer to what the Israeli delegate had said; it was clear where the real international community stood, which was on the side of the rule of law, and not the "other international community", the smaller one, that protected the outlaw State of Israel. The results in the Committee today represented the real international community and the real international opinion. That international community condemned Israel for all its illegal practices, whether in Palestine, the Syrian Golan, and elsewhere.

Regarding the Israeli delegate's mention of Hizbullah, he said he wished to remind Israel that Hizbullah was a member of the unity Government in Lebanon and was a popular response to the occupation by Israel of parts of Lebanon. It was only a resistance movement that had the honour to resist the occupation and liberate most parts of its land.

He said he heard the Israeli delegate also raise the issue of terrorism, and again recalled that two Israeli senior officials, one of whom was a founding member of the State of Israel, were subjected to an arrest warrant issued by "one of the countries in the room". He advised the Israeli delegates to be careful when raising such accusations.

The representative of Georgia said that delegation had been absent during the voting procedures, and expressed support for draft resolutions L.8, L.9, L.10, L.11, L.13, L.14, L.15 and L.16. That delegation would have abstained from L.12.

Closing Remarks of the Chairman

[Chitsaka Chipaziwa](#) of Zimbabwe said that today was the conclusion of agenda items to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee for the main part of the sixty-fifth session. There were a few pending issues that would be dealt with in 2011: the report on the strengthening of the management capacity of UNRWA; ...

Turning to the agenda items dealing with UNRWA and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices, he noted that a total of nine draft resolutions had been recommended for adoption by the General Assembly on various aspects of those important matters. ...

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record