



## General Assembly GA/PAL/1175

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

Committee on the Inalienable Rights  
of the Palestinian People  
327<sup>th</sup> Meeting (AM)

### PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE APPROVES FOUR DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

### ON PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINE QUESTION, RELATED MATTERS

#### Permanent Observer, Israeli Journalist Brief Members as Acting Chairman Provides Update on Developments since Last Meeting

The Palestinian Rights Committee this morning unanimously approved four draft resolutions relating to its own work, as well as that of the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information.

It also heard briefings by its Chairman and the Permanent Observer for Palestine on events that had taken place since its last meeting on 1 October (see Press Release [GA/PAL/1174](#)), and one by Amira Hass, a reporter for the Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz*.

Taking action on the first text, titled “the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly stress the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies on the Middle East peace process. The Assembly would urge immediate and concrete steps to resume active, serious bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and encourage the holding of an international conference in Moscow to expedite resumption of the peace process.

Also by the draft, the Committee — formally known as the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People — would express grave concern over the crisis in the Gaza Strip due to Israel’s imposition of prolonged closures and severe restrictions on movement there. It would also have the Assembly stress the need to remove checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the need to advance reconstruction in Gaza.

By other terms of the text, the Assembly would reiterate its demand for full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860](#) (2009) regarding the December 2008/January 2009 events in the Gaza Strip, the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. It would demand that Israel comply with its international legal obligations to cease immediately the construction of its separation wall in the Territory.

A second draft resolution, titled “Work of the Committee”, would have the Assembly request that body to continue efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination, to continue to review the situation and report to the Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate. The Assembly would further request the Committee to continue its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and parliamentarians, and to continue to involve them in its work, in order to mobilize international solidarity and support, particularly in light of the current period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis.

By a text titled “Division for Palestinian Rights”, the Assembly would request that the Secretary-General continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, considering that it continued to make a most useful and constructive contribution to raising international awareness of the question of Palestine, in addition to generating international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and for a peaceful settlement. The Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to ensure the Division’s continued cooperation United Nations entities addressing the question of Palestine within their programmes.

According to the final draft on “the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information”, the Assembly would request the Department to continue that programme for the biennium 2010-2011, with the necessary flexibility as might be required by developments, considering its usefulness in raising international awareness concerning the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. The programme would include: the dissemination of information on all activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, as well as on the efforts of the Secretary-General

and his Special Envoy vis-à-vis the peace process; the organization and promotion of fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel; and continued assistance to Palestinians in media development, particularly to strengthen the annual training for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists.

Briefing the Committee on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and political developments since its last meeting, Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of Palestine, said that despite reports of a 25 per cent increase in the volume of goods, mainly food and medicine, entering the Gaza Strip in the last few months, the inflow of vital reconstruction materials for rebuilding schools and houses was almost negligible. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) needed 100 new schools to accommodate some 40,000 children, but after a laborious process, Israel had only approved the importation of construction materials to build two schools.

Calling for the immediate and complete lifting of the blockade on Gaza, and for a marked increase in flows of construction, infrastructure and housing materials into the enclave, he also emphasized that exports must resume in order to spur economic recovery, create jobs and promote the local population's ability to live as normal a life as possible.

He said that during its recently-ended 10-month moratorium on settlement construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel had continued building in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, erecting public buildings and completing those under construction before the freeze. Following the lifting of the moratorium, there had been a rush to approve building permits, particularly in East Jerusalem, where 1,000 units had been approved in a single area a few days ago. The construction of 800 units had also been approved in Ariel, a large West Bank settlement, he added.

While Israel called daily for direct negotiations without conditions, he noted, it imposed conditions on the Palestinians, in complete defiance of United Nations resolutions, the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet, all of which called for an end to settlement building. "Israel is totally responsible for the impasse in the negotiations because they are selecting settlements over peaceful negotiations," he said. Due to the intensified settlement activity, the Palestinian Authority was sending letters to the Presidents of the Security Council and General Assembly.

Asking the Council to shoulder its responsibility and force Israel to reopen negotiations, he said it was no longer acceptable or sufficient for the international community merely to say the right things. "It is time for the Security Council to deal with the consequences of the situation so that Israel is brought into compliance with international law and to break the impasse in the political process." A follow-up meeting of the Arab Ministerial Committee would be held in the next few days to assess the situation, with the engagement of the Council and all political blocs in the United Nations, he added.

Ms. Haas of *Haaretz* offered the analogy of a frog in a pot of water as a way to understand the Israeli-Palestinian situation, saying that as the water heated up to a comfortable temperature, the frog would be unable to jump out before it became too hot. Likewise, Israel established "facts on the ground" that it often portrayed as temporary, but only later would the world discover the true motivation behind its policies. While the world believed progress was being made, the real situation was one of stagnation, she said, adding that Israel had created a clear political and geographical map, which fitted into its "far-fetched political intentions". Acting in a piecemeal manner, it planned first to disconnect Gaza from the West Bank in order to foil the proposed two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, no Israeli settlements and an independent Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The blockade of Gaza was a culmination of that policy, she stressed, describing it as "equivalent to the situation in South Africa during Apartheid". All arguments that the blockade was, in fact, a means to punish Hamas were lies. On the contrary, it was about separating the population in Gaza from that in the West Bank. Israel's second aim was to fragment the West Bank and the territory allocated to the Palestinian people, she said, pointing out that Palestinians had limited self-rule in enclaves A and B, but 60 per cent of that territory was off limits to Palestinian development, investment, tourism, farming and other economic activities.

Jerusalem was yet another component of the Israeli status quo, she continued, adding that for the Palestinian people, the city was "about as close as the moon". She said: "It is easier for them to get to America than it is to get to East Jerusalem or the West Bank," noting that the status quo served Israel's interests and most Israelis profited from it. Security, stability and a permanent peace process were wrongly interpreted as peace, she said, pointing out that Israel had gained permanent control over water resources while imposing quotas on Palestinian use of them. Palestinians consumed only 1 litre for every 4 that the Israelis enjoyed, she said. "If there were a two-State solution in place, Israel would have to give that up."

Describing settlements as a substitute for a welfare State, she said they were often considered the only opportunity for some Israelis to upgrade their socio-economic status. Most had been against disengagement from Gaza, seeing it as the beginning of withdrawal from the West Bank and harmful to their own future endeavours to upgrade their status, she said, adding that many Israelis had a vested interest in continuing the low-intensity conflict. The question that must be asked was whether Palestinian and United Nations efforts were actually helping to end the status quo or working to perpetuate it, she stressed.

Countless United Nations resolutions, international condemnation and more than 20 years of Palestinian attempts to reach an agreement with the Israelis appeared to sustain rather than end the occupation, she continued. Israel sought to create a "10-State solution" and financial aid from the United States and other forces was merely proof of the world's support for Israel. Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars went to subsidizing the occupation and the damage caused by Israeli policies, she said.

She went on to note that the global community's support during the 1990s had compensated for losses resulting from Israel's tight closure of the West Bank and its support since 2000 had saved the Palestinians from the disaster arising from the second Intifadah. That support was given in place of political action to force an end to Israel's policies, she said adding that all the aid was actually sustaining the occupation. Israeli construction was intended to build two separate infrastructures: one for Israelis and the other for Palestinians. It also aimed, despite declarations on both sides, to separate Gaza, where Islamic rule under Hamas was strong, from the West Bank, where secular rule was favoured. For most Palestinians, who relied on aid instead of economic growth, the situation was not sustainable, she emphasized, adding: "The Israelis delude themselves if they think this can last forever."

There was cause to fear two developments, she said. First, the seeds of unrest might again lead Palestinians to think that weapons were the only answer, thus triggering total chaos in the region. Only strategic civil disobedience against the present Israeli regime of occupation and apartheid could counter that, she said, adding that she did not foresee that happening. Second, the Israeli right wing had become more powerful and its views more mainstream, she pointed out, noting that they advocated the massive expulsion of Palestinians. The "solution of transfer", or forcing Palestinians to leave, unthinkable 25 years ago, was now widely perceived as a good idea. Settlers attempted to provoke Palestinians into desperate violent acts in order to justify their expulsion, she said, expressing doubt as to whether the United Nations had the leverage to address such a scenario.

She concluded by warning that the region would not tolerate for very long Israeli policies based on military superiority, which also threatened Jewish existence. Israel had missed a "golden opportunity" for peace in the 1990s, when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had accepted a two-State solution on the basis of its belief that Israel was unlike other colonial States. Noting that Zionism had developed in nineteenth-century Europe, when European colonialism had been strong, she said most Jews had not embraced until after the Holocaust the Zionist belief that they should migrate to Israel. Instead of accepting a two-State solution, Israel had decided on the opposite, in effect declaring itself a colonialist entity, she added.

Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), Acting Chairman, provided an update of events since the Committee's last meeting, recalling that 2 October, a joint meeting of PLO Executive Committee and the Fatah party's Central Committee, had decided to suspend direct peace talks until the Israeli Government froze settlement construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Meeting on 18 October for its monthly briefing on the Palestinian question, the Security Council had heard Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, urge the occupying Power to continue its restraint on settlement activity.

He recalled also that Robert Serry, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, had expressed alarm later that month over reports detailing the start of hundreds of new settlement housing units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory after the 26 September expiry of the moratorium. APLO report issued on 5 November had highlighted a sharp increase in settler violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank. Last week, more than 1,300 Jewish housing units had been approved for construction in East Jerusalem, as had the plan to build 800 homes in Ariel.

Emphasizing the Committee's position that all settlement construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, was illegal under international law and would not be recognized by the international community, he said those actions ran counter to international efforts, particularly those of the Middle East Quartet, to create an environment conducive to direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

He said the Division for Palestinian Rights had completed a new Geneva-based segment of its annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority. In addition, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had hosted a separate programme for two Palestinian officials in Geneva for the first time.

Ufuk Gokcen, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said its General Secretariat would host an event in Washington, D.C., in line with the Committee's objectives. Requesting support and guidance from the Division and the Committee's Bureau, he said OIC would work for a solution to the question of Palestine as an important step towards implementing the vision set out by President Barack Obama of the United States in his famous [Cairo speech](#).

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

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