



Press Release

Department of Public Information · News Coverage Service · New York

Security Council
4841st Meeting (AM)

SC/7895
14 October 2003

IN DAY-LONG SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING, PALESTINE OBSERVER SAYS ISRAELI

SECURITY WALL INVOLVES DE FACTO ANNEXATION OF OCCUPIED LAND

Israel Says Palestinian Authority Refused to Dismantle Terrorist Groups, Leaving Few Options to Protect Israeli People

In a day-long Security Council meeting today, 44 speakers raised concerns regarding the security barrier being built by Israel in the West Bank.

Opening the meeting, which had been requested by Syria on behalf of the Arab League, the Permanent Observer for Palestine said Israel was committing a war crime against the Palestinians by building an expansionist wall within occupied Palestinian territory.

Along with settlement activities, the construction of the wall involved the illegal, de facto annexation of expansive areas of occupied land that would effectively transfer large number of Palestinian civilians and would constrict the rest of them in several walled Bantustans. He said Israel's claim that the wall was a security measure to prevent suicide bombings was incredulous — Israel could build protective walls along the armistice line if that were the case.

The representative of Israel responded that his country had few other options to protect its people, with 870 dead and 6,000 wounded in the past three years due to terrorism. In the past 10 years, it had worked for a bilateral solution, he said, but the Palestinian Authority had refused to fulfil its obligations to dismantle terrorist groups, instead having encouraged them, resulting in the continued murders of innocent civilians.

Having a responsibility to protect its people, Israel was building the security fence with great reluctance, since it was likely to cause hardship to both Palestinians and Israelis and represented a massive expense, he said. It was, in addition, not a perfect solution to terrorism. Yet, an overwhelming majority of Israelis across the political spectrum had come to the conclusion that it was a regrettable necessity. He maintained it would not create facts on the ground, as Israel had shown it would willingly remove such fences if there was a negotiated settlement, which he hoped the fence would help bring about.

Almost all speakers at the meeting expressed strong opposition to the construction of the barrier, particularly regarding the fact that its route incorporated territory east of the Green Line. Most also maintained that it would present a major obstacle to the implementation of the [Road Map](#), agreeing with Italy's representative, who spoke on behalf of the European Union, declaring continued strong support for that plan. The representative of Brazil said that the construction of a separation wall, as well as the Israeli announcement of new settlement activities, further discouraged the levels of mutual trust and confidence between the parties concerning the Road Map's implementation.

Syria's representative, introducing a draft resolution it co-sponsored along with Guinea, Malaysia and Pakistan, said the Security Council must make clear to Israel that the wall, along with settler colonialism and the aggression against Syria and Lebanon, were illegal actions. He called for the resolution to be submitted for a vote at the end of the debate.

Many speakers supported such a resolution throughout the day. However, the Council President, speaking in his national capacity as representative of the United States, said that a Council resolution focused on the fence would not further the goal of peace in the region. On the other hand, while he recognized Israel's serious security concerns, the wall was not consistent with the United States view of what the Middle East one day should look like. It was important not to intrude on the lives of Palestinian people and not to prejudge the outcome of negotiations. Norway's representative said that, if the Government of Israel chose to continue construction of the wall, it should be built on the Green Line, and not on the West Bank.

Council members who spoke today also included the United Kingdom, Spain, Bulgaria, Russian Federation, Mexico, Chile, Guinea, France, Germany, China, Angola, Pakistan and Cameroon.

Also speaking today were Malaysia (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Iran, Yemen, Egypt, Cuba, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Japan, Bahrain, Qatar, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Libya, Tunisia, Indonesia, Turkey, New Zealand, Lebanon, Sudan and Nepal.

The Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States and a representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference also spoke.

In addition, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People made a statement.

The meeting began at 11:06 a.m. and was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Background

The Security Council met this morning to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine question, at the request of the Chair of the Arab Group, Syria, on behalf of the League of Arab States.

According to a letter dated 9 October addressed to the President of the Council (document [S/2003/973](#)), Syria's representative asked the Council specifically to address the decision by Israel to proceed with the construction of its "expansionist conquest wall" in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the continuing "illegal Israeli settlement activities aimed at colonizing the Palestinian land".

The letter references a 3 October letter (document [A/58/41-S/2003/938](#)) from the Permanent Observer for Palestine, which brings to the attention of the Council the fact that Israel had publicized its intention to build another 600 settlement housing units in the occupied Palestinian territory. He called on the international community and the Council, in particular, to take a firm and principled stand against such policies and practices.

The Arab Group also submits a draft resolution for Council consideration, included as an Annex to their letter, which reads, as follows:

" *The Security Council* ,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 267 (1969) of 3 July 1969, 298 (1971) of 25 September 1971, 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, 452 (1979) of 20 July 1979, 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980, 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, 1073 (1996) of 28 September 1996 and 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002,

" *Reaffirming* the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

" *Reaffirming* its vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

" *Condemning* all acts of violence, terror and destruction,

" *Stressing* the urgency of ending the current violent situation on the ground, the need to end the occupation that began in 1967 and the need to achieve peace based on the vision of two States mentioned above,

" *Reiterating* its call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to fully and effectively respect the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949,

" *Reiterating* its opposition to settlement activities in the Occupied Territories and to any activities involving the confiscation of land, disruption of the livelihood of protected persons and the de facto annexation of land,

"1. *Decides* that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Territories departing from the armistice line of 1949 is illegal under relevant provisions of international law and must be ceased and reversed;

"2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report on the compliance with this resolution periodically, with the first report to be submitted within one month;

"3. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter."

Statements

NASSER AL-KIDWA, Permanent Observer for Palestine, said the occupation forces had recently killed eight Palestinians, wounded more than 70, and had demolished 120 houses in Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. Amnesty International had described it as a war crime. Today, the forces had ordered deportation of 15 Palestinians from the West Bank to the Gaza strip in violation of international law and Council resolutions.

He said Israel, the occupying Power, was committing an immense war crime against the Palestinians as it built an expansionist wall in occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, involving the confiscation of thousands of dunums of Palestinian land and the illegal, de facto annexation of expansive areas of occupied land. If the international community permitted continuation of such a crime, Israel would have effectively transferred large number of Palestinian civilians and constricted the rest of the Palestinian people in several walled Bantustans.

He said in its first phase, completed at the end of the summer 2003, the expansionist wall had resulted in confiscation of approximately 15,000 dunums (1 dunum = 1,000 square metres), uprooting more than 100,000 trees and destroying 30 kilometres of water networks. The wall cut deep into Palestinian territory, and had isolated more than 105,000 dunums of Palestinian land. With regard to occupied East Jerusalem, Israel had built a wall of 8 kilometres that had resulted in the confiscation of 800 dunums. All that came as part of the plan for "Greater Jerusalem" that extended deep into the occupied territory to include the illegal settlement "Maale Adumim". A wall of 15 kilometres north of Bethlehem was suffocating the city in an attempt to provide for the expansion of settlements south of occupied Jerusalem. On 1 October, Israel had adopted plans for the second phase of the wall, which was to begin with the establishment of the wall east of settlements "Ariel" and "Kedumim", which cut more than 22 kilometres into Palestinian land.

Establishment of the wall was illegal and went hand in hand with Israeli settlement activities, he continued. The occupying Power had illegally transferred more than 400,000 Israeli settlers to Palestinian territory in more than 200 settlements built on more than 8 per cent of Palestinian land. A separate infrastructure and road network had been established, which enabled the settlers to exploit natural resources and water and to terrorize the people. All that had been carried out in spite of the prohibition of such colonization under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the First Additional Protocol. "How can these Israeli war crimes be appropriately described?" he asked. "Is this classic colonization? We believe it is worse than that. Is this a new apartheid system? We believe it is worse than that. It is a combination that has drawn upon these two ugly phenomena, amounting to the lowest level thinking of racist colonizers."

He said Israel's claim that the wall was a security measure to prevent suicide bombings was incredulous and illogical, as Israel could build walls along the armistice line. In reality, the whole issue had revolved around one thing – land and the designs to illegally conquer more land at the expense of the Palestinian people. After the onset of the Oslo peace process, the occupying Power had doubled the number of settlers. Israel was doing all of that while it had not solved the issue of ownership of land in Israel itself. "Absolute madness and compound crimes", he said. All had been sustained by the illegitimate protection, funding and unlimited armaments provided by basically one source.

The Council bore responsibility for the prevailing situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Either Israel would be allowed to continue with all that had been illegally doing – with all the consequent grave results, not the least of which would be the demise of the two-State solution – or Israel would be stopped. "Settlements must be stopped, the wall must be stopped and both be reversed", he said. That would rescue the potential for achieving

peace and a final settlement based on the existence of two States: Israel and Palestine.

DAN GILLERMAN ([Israel](#)) said that today's meeting continued a pattern in which the Council met to censure Israel for its measures to prevent terrorism, rather than addressing terrorism. There was an emergency meeting convened, for example, to address Israel's defensive response against a terrorist training facility in which there were no casualties, while no meeting was convened to immediately address the deliberate murder of 20 innocent civilians before the holiest day of the Jewish Calendar. The message, he said, was that there was a double standard. Israel's actions did not occur in a vacuum; they were in response to years of terrorism of the most brutal kind.

He said that Israel arrived at the decision to construct a security fence with great reluctance, since it was likely to cause hardship to both Palestinians and Israelis and represented a massive expense. It was, in addition, not a perfect solution to terrorism. Yet, over the past three years, an overwhelming majority of Israelis across the political spectrum had come to the conclusion that it was a regrettable necessity.

The most important reason for the wall, he said, was that Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, after years of Israel's quest of bilateral security measures, had not fulfilled any of its obligations under resolutions and agreements, but, instead, had continued to support the use of terrorism to further its political goals. Instead of attempting to control terrorism, Mr. Arafat's associates have fomented hatred and lynched so-called Israeli collaborators. In short, he said, had there been any concerted action by the Palestinian side to prevent terrorism, the security fence might not have been necessary. But, by deciding to remain passive, and even support terrorism, the current leadership had built the fence with their own hands.

In consequence, he said, with nearly 6,000 injured and 870 killed since September 2000, Israel had very few options for protecting its citizens. A security fence was one of the most effective non-violent methods. After the construction of a similar fence, under an Israeli-Palestinian agreement of 1994, not a single terrorist had succeeded in penetrating into Israel from Gaza through the fence in order to execute an attack. The fence would also improve the daily life of Palestinians, by reducing Israel's involvement in Palestinian areas and enabling the removal of roadblocks and checkpoints. Local Palestinians had been engaged and consulted throughout the planning process, with a view to ensuring access to schools, health resources and so on. There had been full respect for private land with regard to relevant humanitarian and local law, and no change in its legal status.

He countered charges that the security fence was a wall, since it was a chain-linked fence over most of its length; that it was racist, since it was merely there to protect Israeli citizens; and that the fence was a de facto annexation. Israel had demonstrated that it was willing and able to dismantle a fence if so required as part of a political settlement. He hoped that, by building the fence, its very function would become irrelevant and that one day it would be dismantled.

FAYSSAL MEKDAD ([Syria](#)) said the Israeli representative's statement had contained many lies, part of a campaign to distort reality. The proof was he did not say a word about where the wall was erected, namely, on the occupied Palestinian territories. The disputed territories he had referred to were what was left of the Palestinian territories, and Israel wanted to annex them. He said the Israeli Government was following the methods of Goebbels: "lie, lie and lie again" until others started to believe you. Israel's objective in building the wall was not to protect security; the track of the wall was far removed from the 1967 borders and was a way to create a de facto border. Israel was, in fact, annexing vast expanses of West Bank territories, he went on, and was violating the most famous of international laws, namely, the inadmissibility of annexing territory by force, and also violating Security Council resolution 242.

He said the present Israeli Government was a war government aiming at ending the peace process. Israel was attempting to justify its practices by claiming it was combating terrorism; in fact, it was perpetrating war crimes and terrorism against Palestinian civilians. It was also exporting the crisis to Syria and Lebanon. If the destruction of more than 120 homes recently was not terrorism, what then was terrorism? he asked.

He said the Council must deter Israel and make clear that "settler-colonialism" and building the wall, as well as the aggression against Syria and Lebanon, were illegal actions, in violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, international humanitarian law and Council resolutions. If the Council refused to address the situation, its credibility would suffer. As the Arab Group had submitted a balanced draft resolution, he hoped that resolution would be submitted to a vote at the end of the debate.

EMYR JONES PARRY ([United Kingdom](#)) said that his country was committed to the Road Map and all its provisions, including reform of the Palestinian Authority. He unreservedly condemned terrorism and recognized Israel's right to implement measures to protect its citizens. Disproportionate use of force, however, only fuelled the cycle of violence. On the question of the fence, he said he was deeply concerned about its route; if built, it should be along the Green Line. It would have a negative impact on the possibility of a negotiated settlement. Israeli settlements had an equally negative effect. For a solution to the problems of the region, a strict, monitored implementation of the Road Map should be pursued, and he urged both parties to comply with their obligations under it.

INOCENCIO ARIAS ([Spain](#)) said that the construction of the wall was counter-productive to the building of trust between the parties in the Middle East conflict. It would also change the situation on the ground, something that Spain was against, and would have adverse implications under humanitarian law. Nothing could justify terrorism, but the construction of the wall on Palestinian land was illegal and harmful to the peace process.

STEFAN TAFROV ([Bulgaria](#)) said his country strongly condemned suicide bombings carried out by Palestinian extremist organizations. He appealed to the Palestinian Authority to take urgent steps to disarm terrorist organizations and dismantle their structures. He appealed to Israel to stop using punitive steps, including extrajudicial killings, and act in accordance with international law. He strongly opposed construction of a security wall that did not follow the Green Line, involved confiscating land, blocked free movement of people and goats, and undermined the Palestinians' hope for the Road Map. That wall was unacceptable, he said. It was important that the entire international community and, in particular, the Quartet, convince both parties to implement the Road Map. Then there would be no reason to build the wall.

SERGEY LAVROV ([Russian Federation](#)) said his Government was seriously concerned by the situation and noted that, recently, the danger of involving other countries had emerged, as well. He firmly condemned terrorism and called upon the Palestinian Authority to undertake maximum efforts to prevent terrorism. An important component for Israel's exit strategy was cessation of illegal acts, such as the construction of the wall and illegal settlements, which must be immediately halted. Both sides must take actions in the spirit of the Road Map. That document, adopted by both sides, was the sole basis for a settlement. If the Road Map was not considered binding in nature, it would remain simply paper and the region would be submerged in violence. That was why his country had proposed a resolution adopting the Road Map. There was also a need to consider holding an international conference on the Middle East. Those proposals were aimed at stopping the violence and opening the possibility for a peaceful settlement.

ADOLFO AGUILAR ZINSER ([Mexico](#)) said his country had condemned terrorist attacks against Israel, which had the right to secure borders. However, the methods Israel was using were illegitimate. The wall, along with incursions into refugee camps, heightened the climate of confrontation. Walls that made the lives of Palestinians more difficult could have no justification under the Road Map. The wall strayed from the Green Line; independent non-governmental organizations had deemed the wall an obstacle to peace, and to the exercise of the human rights of the Palestinians. Israel must halt construction of the wall, as well as unjustified incursions. It was appropriate and timely for the Security Council to express its views on the wall by the adoption of a resolution against it.

CRISTIAN MAQUIEIRA ([Chile](#)) said that the Road Map was in crisis by restrictions on Palestinians, expansion of settlements and by the wall under discussion. He condemned attacks on Israeli civilians, but that could not justify those actions. He condemned the wall as it was counter-productive to a negotiated settlement and flouted international law. The Security Council must issue a stern appeal to stop the building of the wall.

ALPHA IBRAHIMA SOW ([Guinea](#)) said the cycle of violence in the Middle East was intensifying, and a climate of mutual distrust was dominating the atmosphere. The situation in the field was deteriorating. In that context, the stated will of Israel to press forward with the building of the separation wall was of serious

concern. That illegal practice was likely to increase feelings of frustration and hate and was the expression of a policy of "Bantustanization", as well. He urged Israel to put an end to the "deplorable practice" and work to restore to the Palestinian people the territories that had been arbitrarily taken from them. The draft resolution deserved the support of the Council.

JEAN-MARC DE LASABLIERE (France) associated his statement with that to be made by Italy, on behalf of the European Union. He said that the question of the separation wall concerned the very possibility of a negotiated settlement in the Middle East. France had publicly noted its opposition to the construction of a wall that deviated from the Green Line, as well as its opposition to the settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. The wall, with its planned route cutting through Palestinian territory, was illegal under law, could not be justified in the name of the fight against terrorism, had inadmissible humanitarian consequences, and ran contrary to the Road Map. It was the Council's responsibility to adopt a resolution in opposition to it. A conference should also be convened to establish an effective third-party monitoring mechanism for a viable peace process.

GUNTER PLEUGER (Germany), associating himself with the European Union statement, said he deplored the recent surge in violence, which must not be allowed to undermine implementation of the Road Map. He urged the Government of Israel to halt its continuing settlement activities and to stop the construction of the security fence. While recognizing Israel's need for security, he considered the security fence to be detrimental to the implementation of the Road Map. He urged the Palestinian Authority to take all necessary measures to end the violence and terror of militant groups and called on the new emergency cabinet of Ahmed Qurei to crack down on violent groups and to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure. There was no alternative to the Road Map on the way to peace, he said.

WANG GUANGYA (China) strongly deplored the continued construction of the separation wall and expansion of settlements, actions which were not acceptable. The urgent task, at present, was to break the vicious circle of violence. Israel should halt the building of a separation wall and expansion of settlements, as well as stop extrajudicial killings and respect the rights of Palestinians. The Palestinians should halt suicide bombings against civilians. He hoped both Palestinians and Israelis would take into account their long-term aspirations and implement the Road Map. Proposals such as the deployment of an international protection force, sending a Council fact-finding mission and holding an international conference should be considered.

ISMAEL ABRAÃO GASPAR MARTINS (Angola) said the separation wall was the most conspicuous initiative in a climate that was not conducive to peace in the Middle East. Its construction was motivated by fear and would not lead to any positive results; instead, it would create new problems and add to the spiral of violence. The Quartet had agreed that it was counter-productive. He called on both parties to abide by their obligations under the Road Map and give peace a chance.

MUNIR AKRAM (Pakistan) said that the construction of the wall was illegal, entailed suffering for the Palestinian people, and minimized the possibility for a just and equitable solution in the Middle East. The wall would become a serious obstacle to a peace process based on the Road Map. All Council resolutions, as well as the Road Map, agreed on the need for Israel's withdrawal from all of the West Bank. The intention was not to prevent terrorism but to prevent a settlement in the Middle East based on land for peace. It was designed to further entrench the settlers and lead to annexation of land, something that was prohibited by international law.

MARTIN BELINGA-EBOUTOU (Cameroon) said his country had repeatedly called on the parties to refrain from any action that would compromise peace. He wondered, however, whether arrests, seizure of goods and people, continued construction of the separation wall and settlements did not undermine the peace process. The Secretary-General had expressed concern about the continuation of the wall's construction deep into Palestinian territory. In a context of mutual defiance, Israelis and Palestinians would be unable to restore peace. The parties must promote true disarmament, not only physical disarmament, but also psychological and cultural disarmament. The long history of the conflict had demonstrated that without the resolute commitment of the international community, such disarmament would be far in the future.

The Council President, JOHN D. NEGROPONTE (United States), speaking in his national capacity, said the United States had intensively engaged in encouraging Israel and the Palestinian Authority to take concrete steps to implementing the Road Map. The process was not as far along as had been hoped due to the impact of suicide bombings and failure to dismantle the structures that encouraged such acts. Israel had the right to defend itself against those insidious attacks. Any Middle East resolution must take into account the devastating suicide attacks Israelis had had to endure over the past three years.

The wall was not really consistent with the United States view of what the Middle East one day had to look at. Recognizing Israeli security concerns, he said that if the wall was going to be built, it was important not to intrude on the lives of the Palestinian people and not to prejudice the outcome of negotiations. Senior United States officials were engaging directly with Israel in the matter. A Council resolution focused on the fence would not further the goal of peace in the region.

YAHYA MAHMASSANI, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States, said the construction of the wall was just the beginning of the annexation of areas of the West Bank by Israel, since it cut deeply into Palestinian territory. The wall would result in the total destruction of the Palestinian economy and create a new generation of refugees – its real objective was expansion. It was a direct threat to the two-State solution, as well as any hope of a just and lasting peace. He called on the Council to take a firm stance that would force Israel to discontinue the construction of the wall, end the occupation and bring Israel back to the negotiating table.

RASTAMMOHD ISA (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said the movement was extremely concerned at the long-term effect of Israel's settlement policies and construction of the wall in occupied Palestinian territory. Implantation of Israeli colonies in East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza was in violation of international law, in particular, the Fourth Geneva Convention. Construction of the separations was severely undermining the creation of a viable contiguous Palestinian State. The wall was more than a "security wall", it was a devious way to create facts on the ground and impose a unilateral solution.

He said he noted with grave concern that the wall was not being built in accordance with the Armistice Line of 1949. It was designed to engulf settlements. Besides the massive confiscation of land, valuable subterranean water reservoirs had also been annexed. The extensive impact of the wall demanded the immediate action of the Council, particularly its members with the power to influence Israel. He called on the Council to adopt a resolution calling for the destruction of the wall and preventing its completion.

MOHAMMAD HASSAN FADAIFARD (Iran) said that what the world was witnessing in the West Bank was "a visible and clear act of territorial annexation under the guise of security". The wall, once completed, would stretch for hundreds of kilometres, with wide buffer zones, trenches, barbed wires, electric fence, a two-lane patrol road, and "no-go" areas of 70 to 100 metres wide. That was what the Israelis deceitfully called "simply a fence". In addition to the effects on the lives of the Palestinians, the decision on the wall and new settlement was further proof that the Israeli regime had never been serious about peace; its goal was to draw the border arbitrarily and to sabotage the possibility of establishing a viable Palestinian State.

He said that the Israelis' desire to "stick to the completion of the racist wall", coupled with the settlement expansions, sought to ensure the defeat of any efforts aimed at enabling the Palestinians to one day have a viable State. The Council should live up to the expectation of the international community and take necessary action, with a view to upholding international law. The time had come for the Council to demand that the building of the separation wall be stopped and reversed.

ABDULLAH M. ALSAIDI (Yemen) said once again, within only one week, the Security Council was meeting to take up another obstacle to peace in the Middle East – the building of an expansionist wall in the occupied territories. The situation in the Middle East was an ongoing concern of the international community that was now affecting the credibility of the Security Council. Even though the Government in Tel Aviv was justifying its policy of aggression using pretexts of self-defence, it was clear that building the expansionist wall had nothing to do with self-defence, but with further annexation of the occupied areas.

The building of the wall would threaten the Palestinian entity, he said. Its survival would be dependent on Israeli good will. If Israel truly aspired to peace, the path did not lie in the confiscation of land and sowing sentiments of hatred and discord. Genuine security was based on confidence, mutual respect and the respect for international borders. Peace imposed by force was not sustainable. It was time a resolution was adopted calling upon Israel to cease its expansionist practices.

AHMED ABOUL GHEIT (Egypt) said it would be very dangerous for the international community not to address the recent Israeli acts. That could lead to greater confrontation than had recently been seen in the Israeli air attack on Syria. Recent events had prompted greater distrust of Israel's intentions and led everyone to believe that Israel would not abide by the two-State solution. Instead, it was opting for a course that ran counter to the search for a just and lasting solution.

Some said that the wall was being constructed to protect Israeli security and that of its settlements in the occupied territory, he said. If Israelis wanted to live securely and isolate themselves, why not build a separation wall along the ceasefire lines of 1949? The Council must shoulder its responsibility and show its determination to reach a solution in keeping with the two-State plan.

BRUNO RODRIGUEZ PARILLA (Cuba) said a totally unacceptable obstacle to peace – the building of the separation wall in the occupied territories – had been added to the long list of aggression, illegal settlement and State terrorism caused by Israel's consistent rejection of resolutions passed by the Security Council and General Assembly. The building of the wall constituted a violation of international law.

The international community had always refused to recognize illegal Israeli settlements, he said. The surreptitious annexation that was occurring today also required action by the international community. The wall was being built in Palestinian territories, affecting farmlands, natural resources and water. It was a clear territorial expansion on the part of Israel, revealing Israel's true position which went against that of peace. A resolution on that issue must call for the immediate cessation of the building of the wall, ensure that all occupied territories were returned and ensure the cessation of all violence.

ZEID RA'AD ZEID AL-HUSSEIN (Jordan) said his country was in the middle of the circle of instability, both geographically and politically. The latest escalation threatened the peace and stability of all States of the region. The parties must exercise maximum self-restraint and work seriously to restore the political process to its right path. On that basis, he reaffirmed his support for President Bush's vision, put forth in June 2002 to establish peace in the Middle East and implement the Road Map, to which Jordan contributed actively.

Along with his condemnation of recent Israeli actions, including the building of the separation wall, which must be stopped immediately, he condemned the suicide operations against Israelis, on both moral and political grounds. Those operations had reflected negatively on the Palestinian cause and had diverted attention from the main issue.

ABDULAZIZ NASSER AL-SHAMS (United Arab Emirates) said the Council's quick response to the request made to hold an emergency meeting for the second time in 10 days reflected the growing international concerns about that tragic and serious situation. Despite all of the international appeals, the Government of Israel had started the second phase of the separation wall, flouting contempt for the legal, political and moral obligations in the peace agreements and international law. The separation wall would result in de facto annexation of thousands of acres of private and public Palestinian lands, including water and natural resources, in addition to the other Arab and Palestinian lands, which had been seized by Israel in previous decades. Most dangerous had been the recent Israeli attempt to illegally and illegitimately annex East Jerusalem.

He said that failure of the Council to take necessary and effective measures to stop Israel's occupation and aggressive policies had conveyed a wrong message to that Government and encouraged it to continue its aggression against the countries of the region. That explained the continued Israeli military attacks against cities and villages of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the daily demolitions of dozens of Palestinian properties, as well as its air raids against Lebanon and its unjustified military attack against Syria. He appealed to the international community to move urgently to stop the Israeli threat. If not, peace efforts would be ruined, and the entire region would be dragged into a new cycle of violence and war.

KOICHI HARAGUCHI (Japan) said terrorist attacks against innocent people, such as the suicide bombing last month in Haifa, could never be justified. Nevertheless, at the same time, the Israeli attack on Syria last week was "absolutely deplorable" and could only lead to further deterioration of the situation in the Middle East.

Turning to the separation barrier, he expressed regret over Israel's decision to extend it and requested that country to refrain from carrying on construction. After all, the wall would negatively affect the lives of Palestinians. For its part, the Palestinian Authority could fight against extremist violence in a more resolute manner, he said. The Road Map represented the only viable path towards peace, and in order to promote its success, both Israelis and Palestinians must exercise more self-restraint to put an end to the violence.

TAWFEEQ AHMED ALMANSOOR (Bahrain) said Israel was continuing its expansionist policy and creation of a fait accompli by construction of the separation wall. Continuation of construction would lead to a de facto separation of Palestinian territory from other territories and confiscation of land. Israel was flouting international appeals, resolutions and anything that would make viable the establishment of a Palestinian State.

Creation of the separation wall would not provide the security Israel was hoping for or prevent suicide attacks, he said. If Israel wanted peace, it would end its occupation of Palestinian territories and go back to the 1967 borders. He called on the Council and the Quartet to exert pressure on the Government of Israel to refrain from construction of the wall, to tear it down and to stop settlement-building.

JAMAL NASSER AL-BADER (Qatar) said Israel continued to violate United Nations resolutions, whether they were from Assembly or the Council. The most recent aggression against Syria was proof of Israel's intention to violate international law. Israel's decision to build the separation wall had been condemned by the international community as it would negatively impact on the lives of the Palestinian people and their free movement. According to the World Bank, the separation wall would take up 12 per cent of the West Bank. The wall, which was more dangerous than the Berlin Wall, would have a negative impact on the negotiating process and on a lasting settlement.

DUMISANI KUMALO (South Africa) said his country had condemned recent terrorist attacks against Israelis in the strongest terms, but supported the draft resolution to demand the cessation and reversal of the construction of the separation wall. That activity was the latest in a decades-old effort to expand the territory of Israel, which included spending large sums to encourage the settlement of 230,000 settlers in Palestine. The building of the wall was a clear act of territorial annexation under the guise of security. It would make a negotiated settlement even harder to achieve. He urged the Security Council not to remain silent about it.

ABDULAZIZ AL-BADI (Saudi Arabia) said recent events confirmed the aggressive nature of Israel, which had shown that it meant to annex or Judaize more Palestinian territory. The racist wall of separation was started under the pretext of security, but it was part of Sharon's plan to erase the Green Line, to annex the settlements and divide remaining Palestinian territory.

Israel would not have continued such activity except for the silence of the Council and the acceptance of double standards. He called on the Council to fully assume its responsibilities by deciding on the illegitimacy of the construction, calling for its immediate end, and the calling on Quartet to fully assume its responsibilities concerning the Road Map, including the use of forces to intervene between the two parties and ensure their compliance with that peace plan.

LUIS ENRIQUE CAPPAGLI (Argentina) said the killings in a Haifa restaurant of Jewish and Arab customers highlighted the barbarity of terrorism. The atrocities damaged the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian Authority must take urgent measures to dismantle terrorist structures and arrest terrorism.

Recognizing the legitimate right of Israel to self-defence, he said that defence must be exercised in conformity with international law. Israel must refrain from excessive force in densely populated areas and halt collective punishment. According to the Road Map, settlement activities in occupied territories should stop, including the so-called natural growth, and the dismantling of settlements should commence. Construction of the wall was a violation of international law. He called for an end to the ongoing construction, especially in tracks that did not follow the Green Line.

ALI ABDUSSALAM TREKY (Libya) said the wall was part of a long-term plan by Israel to annex occupied territories, a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Charter. It was also an attempt of Israel to reaffirm its annexation of East Jerusalem. Israel was continuing its expansion of illegal settlements, and such acts would be a cause for resistance, as all people under occupation resisted it.

He condemned every form of terrorism. However, calling resistance to occupation terrorism was an excuse used by all colonizing Powers against all those who resisted them. The essential problem was the problem of the occupation of Palestinian territories. The Council must make Israel respect all its resolutions and those of the Assembly and withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories.

ALI HACHANI (Tunisia) said the Security Council was again meeting to review Israeli actions against the Palestinian people and Israel's flouting of international law. Given the situation and the need for peace in the region, the Security Council must adopt a stern resolution. Tunisia had followed with concern various reports, both official and informal, on the Israeli Government's construction of a separating wall in flagrant violation of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The wall flew in the face of the Road Map, he said. The attempts to impose a fait accompli upon the Palestinian people would only lead to further despair and frustration. The Security Council must, therefore, send a clear message to the Israeli Government. The Middle East was a region in need of good will – not separation walls.

RONALDO MOTA SARDENBERG (Brazil) said peace would not be achieved by merely forcing the other's hand to a final capitulation. Only the resumption of negotiations that resulted in a just and comprehensive agreement could pave the way for a lasting peace for all the peoples in the region.

The construction of a separation wall, as well as the Israeli announcement of new settlement activities, further discouraged the levels of mutual trust and confidence, he said. He called upon the parties to return to the negotiating table and, through resolute and bold steps, to begin the implementation of the Road Map. The creation of a Palestinian State and a State of Israel, living within international recognized borders, was the only prospect capable of ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East.

REZLAN ISHAR JENIE (Indonesia) said the latest report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had noted that the construction of the wall was located as deep as six kilometres inside the West Bank and that vast areas of lands had been bulldozed and seized. Israel's construction of the wall was capable of derailing the Middle East process, and plunging the region into a deeper cycle of violence.

It also threatened the Road Map, which presently represented the most viable vehicle for a solution to the situation between the Palestinians and Israelis, with the establishment of an independent Palestinian State by 2005. The proposed draft resolution on the situation in the Middle East was not only timely, but also necessary to achieve a comprehensive solution to the conflict. Given that situation, and the fact that the draft was balanced, Indonesia would fully support its adoption by the Security Council.

UMIT PAMIR (Turkey), associating itself with the statement on behalf of the European Union, said that while recognizing Israel's legitimate security needs, the structure being built aggravated the dire conditions of the Palestinian people. Moreover, the wall was damaging to the political, security and socio-economic processes envisioned in the Road Map.

Any evidence of improvement in the daily lives of the Palestinians who struggled for their survival would reflect positively on the security situation and create a platform for contacts that were to be resumed between the two sides, he said. The Palestinians had to be resolute in fighting acts of terror and should immediately start dismantling the terrorism infrastructure. The wall, on the other hand, was a blunt tool punishing a whole people and casting doubt on the intentions of the State of Israel.

AHMAD HAJI HOSSEINI, Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said the form of apartheid Israel practised against Palestinians fulfilled all elements of the crime as defined under the 1976 apartheid Convention. In their final communique on 30 September after their annual coordination meeting in New York, the OIC Foreign Ministers had condemned the building of the expansion wall, which involved the confiscation of Palestinian land; the isolation of Palestinian villages, towns and cities; and the destruction of Palestinian property and livelihood.

He said Israel had unequivocally and consistently failed to adhere to its obligations as the occupying Power vis-à-vis the Palestinian civilian population. The impunity being granted it served to encourage further violations of the Geneva Conventions and The Hague Regulations, including through grave breaches. The international protection force that had been consistently called for as an enforcement mechanism was now a greater necessity than ever in a first step towards the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from the occupied territories and the dismantling of the occupation.

The Council bore responsibility for further bloodshed, he concluded, if it failed to act and instead allowed Israel to continue with its construction of the wall, its settlement policies and its illegal occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories. Again, that occupation was the root cause of the present conflict. The only way out was for the Council to compel Israel to stop its campaign against the Palestinian people and its colonial settlement policies and to return to the conference table.

MARCELLO SPATAFORA (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the Union was strongly opposed to the construction of a separation wall in the West Bank and urged Israel to stop its construction along with other illegal activities, such as the confiscation of land or demolition of houses. The Union strongly condemned terrorist attacks against Israel, and urged the Palestinian Authority to take immediate, decisive steps against those carrying them out.

While understanding the security preoccupation of Israel and that State's legitimate right to self-defence in the face of terrorist attacks, he underlined that the fight against terrorism must be carried out in full respect of the principles of international law. Only a negotiated settlement of the conflict, leading to the end of the occupation and the creation of a viable Palestinian State alongside Israel, would bring the security to which Israel was entitled. For that reason, the European Union was ready to assist all parties in the implementation of the Road Map and to contribute to an effective and credible monitoring mechanism in the field, which it deemed essential to that implementation.

JOHAN L. LOVALD (Norway) said his Foreign Minister, when meeting with President Arafat today, would call on him to ensure that the Palestinian security organizations were consolidated and would be reporting to an empowered Interior Minister. His country recognized Israel's right to self-defence.

Regarding the wall, he said his Government would have preferred to see no wall erected between Israelis and Palestinians, as it was hard to see the fence as a means to sustainably address security problems. That could only be done by ending the occupation and establishing a Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. However, if the Government of Israel chose to continue construction of the wall, it must be built on the Green Line, and not on the West Bank.

DON MACKAY ([New Zealand](#)) said he strongly supported Quartet efforts to work for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. He was concerned about the increase of violence, such as the attack in Haifa. It highlighted the need for both sides to find a resolution to the conflict. He called on leaders of both sides to commit to the peace process and to implement their respective obligations under the Road Map.

They must not allow the acts of a few to destroy the hope for peace for all, he said. The construction of the separation wall served only to undermine the peace process. He urged Israel to reconsider its decision to proceed with the wall. Although extremists were using violent attacks to disrupt peace, assassinations, settlement policies and heavy-handed military responses helped ensure that that tactic would succeed.

SAMI KRONFOL ([Lebanon](#)) said the wall would undermine the territorial integrity of the would-be Palestinian State and prevent access of Palestinians to Jerusalem, which should be their capital. The wall was actually a system of integrated works that was so expensive it had to make use of foreign loan guarantees. It was part of the Israeli expansionist policy that had resulted in much suffering for the Palestinian people, including the displacement of 4 million of them, most of whom were blocked from returning to their homes.

Settlements were another illegal part of that policy, he said. Contrary to its statement, a wall similar to the one now being built in the West Bank did not help Israel willingly abandon its occupation of Lebanon. Israel had been forced out by both Lebanese and international opposition after decades. As the wall was contrary to international law, he pleaded with the Security Council to adopt the Arab Group resolution.

MAGDI TAHA ([Sudan](#)) said he hoped for a just and firm position on the situation in the occupied territories that would restore the credibility of the Council in the face of Israel's contempt for its resolutions. The construction of the expansionist wall was an unbearable slap in the face of international legality, and, through it, Israel was driving the last nail in the coffin of the Road Map.

MURARI RAJ SHARMA ([Nepal](#)) said Israel had the right to live within secure borders and Palestinians had the right to a viable State within the 1967 borders. His country had consistently denounced the use of excessive force by Israel against Palestinians and attacks by Palestinians against innocent Israeli civilians. Suicide bombings brought Israelis to despair. By the same token, Israeli settlements and construction of the separation wall brought Palestinians to despair.

The construction of the wall within the Palestinian territory was absolutely unacceptable. He said bold steps were now necessary to salvage the peace, as small steps had not worked. It was time, maybe, to deploy international forces along the 1967 borders while the parties negotiated a final settlement.

PAPALOUIS FALL, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said Israel was persisting in the unlawful building of a wall which in many places was east of the Green Line. The wall sealed off a number of Palestinian communities and undermined the continuity of a Palestinian State, prejudging the final outcome of status negotiations. The Israeli authorities also wanted to proceed with the "enveloping of Jerusalem wall".

The Committee had constantly expressed its concerns about the construction, although it understood Israel's right to construct security structures on its own territory, he said. Despite repeated appeals by the international community, including Tel Aviv's own allies, the Israeli Government was deliberately running the risk of annihilating all prospects of creating a Palestinian State.

It was necessary for the Council to compel Israel to end construction of the wall, he said. He asked the Council to do its utmost to bring about a reactivation of the Road Map, which was the only way forward to provide for Israeli security and a Palestinian state.

Mr. AL-KIDWA, Permanent Observer for Palestine, responding to the statement of Israel, said that it was blatantly not true that the Palestinian Authority supported terrorism. The killing of innocent civilians was wrong whether they were Israelis or Palestinians. It was also not true that the wall was Israel's only option. The wall could be built on the Green Line or within Israel. The representative had not given any security reason for the wall not being built in that manner.

It was also false that no Palestinians would suffer isolation due to the wall or that Israel was in support of the Road Map, he said. Israel was actually rejecting any negotiated settlement by the construction of the wall. He said he supported the proposal made by Russia at the meeting of the Quartet, but that should only be dealt with after the Council took action on the draft at hand, so that the option of a two-State solution remained viable.

Mr. GILLERMAN ([Israel](#)), taking the floor for the second time, said those seeking to censure Israel had been long on propaganda and short on facts and self-reflection. Had the Palestinians agreed to good faith negotiations about the two-State solution rather than embark on terrorist acts, today's debate would not have been necessary. Familiar talk of occupation as the source of all evils sounded hollow when the possibility of ending it had been rejected by the Palestinian side.

When the Palestinian side and Arab cousins would accept some measure of responsibility, the path to a peaceful settlement would open up. He urged delegates, before deciding how to respond to the issue, to think about the lives that could be saved by the security fence and the lives that could have been saved had it been constructed earlier. It was the duty and obligation of the international community and the Council to protect future victims.

* * * * *