



Press Release

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Fifty-seventh General Assembly
Third Committee
24th & 25th Meetings (AM & PM)

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF LINK BETWEEN COMBATING RACISM AND PROMOTING DIALOGUE, AS THIRD COMMITTEE BEGINS DEBATE ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Also today, the representative of Egypt introduced a draft resolution on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian children.

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Interactive Dialogue

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AMR ROSHDY (Egypt) said the right to self-determination was among the rights emphasized most by a wide range of international covenants and treaties. The obvious reason for this was that the right to self-determination was of particularly importance because its realization was an essential condition for the effective guarantee and observance of individual human rights and for the promotion and strengthening of those rights. The people of Palestine had suffered for more than 50 years under the brutal Israeli occupation that followed a selective approach in the implementation of international covenants and treaties and perceived them merely as means of fulfilling self-interest. The daily suffering of the people of Palestine and the continuation of the deprivation of their inherent right to self-determination gave a clear and simple message that humanity was not yet civilized.

It was beyond comprehension that the international community could live with the daily and pre-meditated killing and displacement of Palestinian children, women and older people, he said. As long as occupation continued, the suffering of the Palestinian people would continue. Egypt stressed, anew, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to struggle against occupation. That right of the Palestinian people was as legitimate as the right of European people to resist foreign occupation 60 years ago.

Mr. ABULGASIM (Sudan) ...

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His delegation invited the international community to closely examine what was occurring in Palestinian territories under Israeli occupation. All should work to ensure the implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions in that regard. On the issue of mercenaries, Sudan agreed with the relevant reports before the Committee that noted that such individuals continually committed terrorism and other criminal acts that could lead to the destabilization of States. He urged the international community to move urgently toward addressing that issue.

Mr. YAGOB (Libya) ...

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The United Nations must continue its efforts to help those countries facing occupation, particularly the Palestinian people, he said. The international community must ensure that all peoples were able to exercise the right to self-determination. ...

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Introduction of Drafts

The Committee also had before it a draft text on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian children (document A/C.3/57/L.23), which would have the Assembly stress the need for Palestinian children to live a normal life free from foreign occupation, destruction and fear in their own State. It would have the Assembly therefore demand that Israel, the occupying Power, respect relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and comply fully with the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention in order to ensure the well-being and protection of Palestinian children and their families.

In her introduction of the draft, the representative of Egypt emphasized the situation of Palestinian children as a result of Israeli incursions. She added that representatives of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as the Observer of Palestine had bowed to the concerns of other delegations and had not

submitted the text to the Assembly special session on children, held last May. It was now time to submit the draft to the appropriate body, the Third Committee. She hoped the text would be adopted by consensus.

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Right of Reply

A representative of Israel, exercising his right of reply, said he was taking the floor to respond to Egypt's statement earlier in the day. Egypt was a neighbouring country with which Israel had had a peace treaty since 1979 and to which it had returned all of the Sinai. Egypt's statement, however, was yet another verbal accusation – pouring oil in the fire rather than supporting a culture of peace. In fact, Egypt's statement condoned terrorism. Any delegate that drew a distinction between terrorism and the 'so-called' resistance endorsed terrorism and encouraged the perpetrators to continue. Israel respected the right to self-determination; however, Israel required equal recognition of its own right to self-determination.

A representative of Egypt, exercising her right to reply, said the Israeli delegate had said there was a need for dialogue and a culture of peace. Egypt had called for peace with Israel in order to put an end a decades-long war. Based on that principle, it was clear that in order to achieve peace in the region, Israel had to take the steps necessary – to give the Palestinian people their right to self-determination. The occupation of the lands of other people was certainly against democracy and a culture of peace. She stressed that Egypt condemned terrorism in all its forms; however, the right to resistance was a legitimate right and must not be lumped together with terrorism.

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