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General Assembly, Concluding Annual Debate on Question of Palestine, Situation in Middle East, Adopts Six Resolutions by Recorded Vote

Sixty-ninth session,
60th & 61st Meetings (AM & PM)

- **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**
MEETINGS COVERAGE

Offering a range of solutions for moving the Middle East peace process forward, while regretting the steps backward due to escalation of violence in recent months, the General Assembly adopted six draft resolutions today by recorded vote on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East overall.

As the Assembly wrapped up its discussion begun yesterday on the Palestinian question, the representative of Norway said the Israelis and Palestinians were so entangled in their own political dynamics, it would “weaken the hands” of those who wanted to negotiate. The international community would have to come to their aid. Several delegates noted the escalation of violence in Gaza in July and August had exacerbated the substantial humanitarian challenges already facing Palestinians, and they urged one another to pledge to rebuild the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Delegates also called for restraint from both sides in the conflict so that violence would not worsen, and the peace process could resume in order to achieve the two-State solution.

The Assembly then adopted four resolutions on that agenda item. With 148 delegates in favour, 6 against (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau and United States) and 8 abstaining (Cameroon, Honduras, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Togo, Tonga and Vanuatu), the Assembly adopted a text that stressed the need for Israel, the occupying Power, to withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, reiterated its demand for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activity and demanded that Israel comply with its obligations under international law.

The text, among other things, also called for the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and bolstered efforts to reach a final peace settlement, as well as urged Member States to expedite economic, humanitarian and technical aid to the Palestinian people and Government in order to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation there and to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure.

Other drafts related to the Organization's various bodies concerned with the question of Palestine, with the Assembly requesting, among other things, that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People continue to work with all actors to promote the realization of those rights; the Secretariat's Division for Palestinian Rights monitor relevant developments and organize international meetings and conferences on the subject; and the Department of Public Information's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine continue to provide assistance to and training for Palestinian journalists.

The Assembly then turned to the situation in the Middle East, namely, in Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan. In introducing two draft resolutions on that subject, Egypt's representative noted the international community's rejection of Israel's ongoing occupation and practices in the occupied Arab territories.

The Assembly — by a recorded vote of 144 in favour to 6 against (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau and the United States), with 10 abstentions (Australia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Togo, Tonga and Vanuatu) — reiterated its determination that all administrative and legislative measures taken by Israel to alter the legal status of the Holy City of Jerusalem were null and void.

The Assembly expressed grave concern in particular over the recent series of negative incidents in East Jerusalem, and stressed that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the entire city should take into account the legitimate concerns of both sides.

Another text — supported by 99 delegations, rejected by 6 (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, and the United States), with 57 abstaining — declared the Assembly's concern over Israel's failure to implement Assembly resolution 497 (1981), as well as the need to implement the 1907 Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention with respect to the occupied Syrian Golan. It called upon Israel to withdraw to the pre-1967 borders, noting that peace would not be achieved without Israel's serious commitment to that withdrawal.

Also delivering statements during the debate were the representatives of the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Cuba, Qatar, Nicaragua, Libya, Iceland, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Kazakhstan, Venezuela, Morocco, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Argentina, Bangladesh, Maldives, Russian Federation, Syria, Italy (on behalf of the European Union), Israel, United States, Singapore, Brazil, Iran, Pakistan and Bolivia, as well as the Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine.

The General Assembly will meet again at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 3 December, in observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, in order to discuss the role of family-oriented policies in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

Background

The General Assembly met today to conclude its debate on the question of Palestine and take action on the following drafts: Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, (document A/69/L.21); Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, (document A/69/L.22); Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, (document A/69/L.23); and Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, (document A/69/L.24). For background, please see Press Release [GA/11591](#) of 24 November 2014.

Also meeting to convene a debate on the situation in the Middle East, the Assembly had before it the Secretary-General's report on that subject (document [A/69/341](#)), as well as a draft resolution on Jerusalem (document A/69/L.25) and a draft on the Syrian Golan (document A/69/L.26) for its action.

Statements

LANA ZAKI NUSSEIBEH ([United Arab Emirates](#)) emphasized that the international community, especially the Quartet and the Security Council, in accordance with international law, must demand that Israel: immediately cease all settlement activity; remove all barriers and restrictions preventing freedom of movement for Palestinians and lift the siege on the Gaza Strip; and release more than 5,000 Palestinian prisoners, including those under administrative detention. Israel would only achieve security when it complied with its obligations as an occupying Power, demonstrated political will to achieve peace in the region and cooperated in realizing the two-State solution in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative. She welcomed the operational start of the temporary Gaza reconstruction mechanism and called for the international community to pressure Israel to cooperate with the mechanism and also to strengthen its political and development support to the Palestinian National Authority.

HUSSEIN HANIFF ([Malaysia](#)) welcomed the recognition of a Palestinian State by the parliaments of the United Kingdom and Spain. He reiterated Malaysia's full support for the Palestinian people's legitimate right to an independent State of Palestine, based on 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital. Commending the establishment of the Palestinian Unity Government, he expressed hope that all Member States would support it as well. Alarmed at the rise of violence that had erupted in Jerusalem, he condemned Israel's invasion of the Al- Haram Al-Sharif compound, and its continued building of illegal settlements on Palestinian lands. He urged the international community to further demand that Israel immediately cease construction of those illegal settlements. The situation in the Gaza Strip had deteriorated following the outbreak of hostilities in July and August that killed 2,189 Palestinians, including 513 children, left more than 108,000 people homeless and hundreds of thousands of people displaced. He also noted with deep concern the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and urged all Member States to pressure Israel to immediately lift its blockade on the enclave. Malaysia firmly believed that the normalization of the situation in Gaza would significantly reduce tensions and facilitate the resumption of the political process.

RODOLFO REYES RODRIGUEZ ([Cuba](#)), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, said three months after the Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire, his Government observed with concern the deteriorating situation in Jerusalem. The constant demolition of homes, the expropriation of lands, and the forced displacements of families would only refuel tensions there. War crimes had caused enormous suffering for the people of Palestine. Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez addressed a letter to the President of the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, confirming Cuba's unequivocal solidarity with the Palestinian people. The letter also called for the recognition of the Palestinian State, with pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital, as a full Member State of the United Nations. Cuba fully supported any initiative in the Security Council that would create a deadline for the establishment of a Palestinian State. All the moral force of the United Nations must be used to achieve those objectives.

Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani ([Qatar](#)), underscoring the need for Israel's implementation of its commitments as an occupying Power in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law, said comprehensive peace would never be achieved with the use of excessive force. The ongoing violence against civilians, destruction of homes and confiscation of land, among others, would only aggravate the conflict and push parties to more extremist positions. She condemned the recent exacerbation of conflict in occupied Jerusalem, noting that the recent dangerous events should be an incentive for the international community to resume peace negotiations in the Middle East in order to achieve a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question. The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, should shoulder its responsibility by

taking speedy action in order to achieve that goal and by positively responding to the Palestinian leadership's application to the United Nations for full membership.

Jaime Hermida Castillo ([Nicaragua](#)), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, said that after 66 years, not only did Israel continue to hamper the peace in Palestine, it had also further increased its illegal practices, which undermined a peaceful solution. Every year the international community renewed its cause for peace in the Middle East. He reaffirmed Nicaragua's solidarity with the people of Palestine, and their struggle for freedom and the establishment of a Palestinian State within pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital. During the conflict in Gaza in July and August, more than 1,500 people were murdered, most of them women and children. Structures in Gaza were totally levelled. He reiterated the call to deliver on promises to accelerate the reconstruction project, so that Gaza had the minimum requirements for survival this winter. The conflict must be resolved through dialogue and negotiations, and he called on the Member States to adopt a resolution with definite deadlines for the formation of a Palestinian State.

Ibrahim O. A. Dabbashi ([Libya](#)), noting the continued tragedy faced by the Palestinian people, said it was unfortunate that the international community had remained paralysed. He welcomed Sweden's decision to recognize the State of Palestine and invited other Member States to do the same. He welcomed the State of Palestine's accession to the Geneva Conventions, as well as other international humanitarian law treaties, and invited Palestinian authorities to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as quickly as possible to ensure that those who had perpetrated grave crimes against the Palestinian people could be duly judged. It was high time for the international community to take measures to protect the Palestinian people, to establish a deadline to put an end to Israeli occupation, and to accept the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations.

GRETA GUNNAARSDOTTIR ([Iceland](#)) said the Security Council had received a number of letters from both sides highlighting acts of aggression and provocation. The situation would become out of control unless leaders on both sides showed restraint. Facts on the ground were steadily eroding prospects for a two-State solution. Palestinians on the West Bank and East Jerusalem were seeing their human rights flouted, and their property seized and destroyed. Gaza remained blockaded, with serious humanitarian consequences and no prospect of becoming a normal economy and part of the Palestinian States. At the same time, Israel felt threatened and Israelis lived in fear of violence. Iceland recognized the State of Palestine in 2011. That modest signal, added to that of other Member States of the United Nations, encompassed the vision of a State based on the 1967 borders, where Israel and Palestine could live side by side in peace and security. The leaders

of both sides must take steps to stop retaliation and violence, and they must engage with each other. Provocation and retaliation would only continue the downward spiral.

GEIR O. PEDERSEN (Norway) said that credible negotiations towards a lasting two-State solution must be revitalized and urged the parties to refrain from unilateral acts that would pre-empt them and from incitements, including settlement construction, which undermined moderate leaders. Underlining that the humanitarian needs in Gaza must be addressed with a perspective on the whole of Palestine, he urged all donors to deliver on their pledges, preferably through the Palestinian Authority. He called on all parties to support a process that would restore government functions and effective control of Gaza to the Authority, and also called on all Palestinian factions to unite behind a common vision under the leadership of President Abbas. He urged Israel to open Gaza's borders to normal trade, while addressing the security needs of civilians. It was crucial that the Palestinian Authority be in charge of Gaza reconstruction. Norway was reactivating the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee local aid regime in Ramallah and Jerusalem, as the only comprehensive mechanism to follow up both the pledges and the political messages from Cairo. The first high-level stocktaking of the Cairo conference was scheduled for March 2015 in Brussels. He urged Israel to reconsider and reverse its appropriation of land near Bethlehem and recent announcements of plans for new settlement construction.

KHIANE PHANSOURIVONG (Lao People's Democratic Republic), voicing deep concern about the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip in July and August this year and recent escalation of violence in the West Bank and Jerusalem, called on all parties to exert all efforts necessary to avoid exacerbating the already very tense situation, take every possible step to create conditions conducive to successful peace negotiations, and refrain from actions that undermined trust and jeopardized the talks. Hopeful for a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, he also called upon the parties to resume and accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement. He reaffirmed his country's continued support for the Palestinian people in attaining their long-delayed goal of a viable, peaceful and prosperous State of Palestine that was a full-fledged member of the United Nations.

Kairat Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan) expressed serious concern over continuing violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the entire region. Kazakhstan condemned the rocket launches by Hamas and the disproportionate use of force by Israel. Many years of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, with the strong involvement of the international community, had not brought concrete results. The conflict continued to threaten regional and international peace and security. All parties in the Middle East conflict must fulfil their commitments with increased responsibility. He commended the internal Palestinian reconciliation process and expressed hope

that international measures would contribute to the cease-fire and the resumption of peace talks. His country reiterated the recognition of the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, an independent State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, peaceful coexistence with Israel, and full-fledged membership in the United Nations. The two-State solution was the only viable option for a durable peace. He called on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to show political will to reach a peace agreement.

EDUARDO SUAREZ (Venezuela), associating with the Non-Aligned Movement, reiterated his call for Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, end its settlement construction and dismantle its separation wall. Venezuela categorically condemned the illegal actions of the occupying Power, including the indiscriminate use of force; arbitrary detention of Palestinian men, women and children; massive forced displacements; demolition of homes; denying Palestinians access to water and land for agricultural cultivation; and harassment of teachers and students in Gaza and restrictions on their movement, among other illegal measures. The occupying Power's acts of terrorism and war crimes had consequences under international law and they could not be ignored. He reaffirmed his country's support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, a Palestinian State with the pre-1967 borders, and full membership in the United Nations.

Abderrazzak Laassel (Morocco) said Israel's unjustified aggression in Gaza had led to the deterioration of the situation in the region. There were no safe places in Gaza; even the facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) had not been spared. His country had provided humanitarian and financial support to its Palestinian brothers in solidarity with their ordeal. It had also participated in the donor conference held in Cairo in October and would contribute to reconstruction in Gaza. He commended Egypt's efforts in brokering a ceasefire signed on 26 August this year, but followed with concern Israeli authorities' provocative statements and their continued settlements and displacement of residents. Noting that such aggressive methods contradicted international efforts to find a just settlement of the Middle East conflict and would breed extremism, he called on the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel. The Palestinian conflict would not be resolved by war, bloodshed or killing of innocent civilians. The only means for resolution would be a return to negotiations.

Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, said it was meaningful to take the floor today as the Assembly celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. His country recognized the right of the Palestinian people to live in their own free and sovereign State. The last trace of destruction and death left behind by Israel confirmed that the status quo was unsustainable. The situation required the recognition of a sovereign Palestinian State, living side-by-side with Israel, based on the 1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as its

capital. His Government called for a solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees, a halting of the construction of the separation wall, and an end to the blockade. As the Assembly took action on resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Middle East, Member States could count on his country's sponsorship. The resolutions were a call to the conscience of the international community. He encouraged the Security Council to promptly grant the State of Palestine full membership in the United Nations.

Carol Viviana Arce Echeverría ([Costa Rica](#)) said 67 years had passed since her country had supported Assembly resolution 181, which had proposed the creation of two States – an Israeli State and a Palestinian one. In 2008, Costa Rica had recognized the State of Palestine and supported its entry into United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Costa Rica had also voted in favour of the 2012 Assembly resolution that granted the State of Palestine Observer State status in the United Nations. Her country, which had functioned without a standing army for 66 years and was a defender of peace and the rule of law, firmly condemned the escalation of violence and conflict in the region and called on the parties to resolve their differences. She urged the resumption of negotiations based on the obligations set forth in previous agreements between the parties, backed by international law and by decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. She expressed hope in seeing Palestine transform its goal of achieving peace and stability into a tangible reality.

DESRA PERCAYA ([Indonesia](#)), associating himself with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), expressed concern at recent events in Jerusalem, particularly Israel's incursions against the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The West Bank, including that Mosque, was an integral part of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. Thus, settlement construction in the area was both illegal and obstructed the viability of a Palestinian State. Further, Israel's aggression against Gaza this year had deepened the humanitarian crisis caused by the blockade, which itself was a clear violation of international law. Further, Israel was continuing construction of the separation wall 10 years after the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion establishing its illegality. Expressing concern over Israel's refusal to grant access to Gaza for members of the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry, he also called on Israel to heed the "noble aspiration of the international community for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital".

MATEO ESTREME ([Argentina](#)) said there was an urgent need to put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Following the 1991 Madrid Conference, there had been numerous international and group measures to create peace in the region, none of which had achieved the desired aims, leading to frustration worldwide at the lack of real progress. There were still recurring cycles of violence and destruction. His country condemned the disproportionate use of force by Israel that

had led to the loss of life, its attacks on schools and hospitals, as well as its blockade of the Gaza Strip. Argentina also condemned in the strongest of terms the launching of rockets by Hamas towards Israel. The Argentine Government had lent its support to the rebuilding of Gaza. But to put an end to the cycle of destruction, a lasting solution was needed. He condemned the recent violence at the Kehillat Bnei Torah synagogue, and the attacks at the mosque in Al-Mughayir, none of which could be justified. Israel's response was almost exclusively focused on military options, detentions on a grand scale and the demolition of homes of those involved. The Security Council must stop tolerating acts of provocation and acts that were incompatible with peace, and it must do everything in its power to salvage the two-State solution.

MD. MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said the upgraded status in the United Nations of the State of Palestine was a small step toward amending a "historical injustice". Much work lay ahead to create conditions that would allow the resumption of meaningful negotiations and preserve the viability of the two-State solution. There could not be a military solution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict; only through negotiations could the viable solution to the conflict be realized. The stalled peace process must restart. Noting that the Fourth Geneva Convention, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), the land-for-peace principle, the Madrid Conference Terms of Reference, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative were the best guides to achieving a peaceful solution, he asked Member States to recommit themselves to work for lasting peace in the holy land.

AHMED SAREER (Maldives) said that the Assembly's inability to mitigate unending streams of hatred that fuelled decades-long conflicts in the region was one of its enduring failures. The international community must understand that peace would only be achieved by ending the occupation. His country called for a two-State solution, recognizing the sovereign and independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The recent assault in Gaza had killed 2,189 Palestinians and had led to the destruction of infrastructure, theft of natural resources, and oppression. The continued disproportionate use of force against Palestinian civilians and infrastructures were part of an institutionalized policy of collective punishment. The Israeli settlements, which had doubled in number 2013, were illegal and had been condemned by the Assembly, the Human Right Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Security Council. Policies of hatred and oppression in Palestine had radicalized generations across the region, which now faced one of its biggest threats in the form of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). State and non-state actors in the region were using religion to justify violence and violations of international humanitarian law. Maldives strongly condemned those groups.

Situation in Middle East: Introduction of Draft Resolutions

AMR ABDELLATIF ABOULATTA (Egypt), noting the international community's rejection of Israel's ongoing occupation and practices in the occupied Arab territories, introduced the draft resolutions on Jerusalem (document A/69/L.25) and on the Syria Golan (document A/69/L.26). He said the draft on Jerusalem underscored that all administrative and legislative measures taken by Israel to alter the legal status of the holy city were null and void, and that any comprehensive and fair solution to the question of Jerusalem should include international provisions accompanied by international guarantees that secured the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants.

He said the second draft, on the Syrian Golan, reaffirmed the Assembly's concern over Israel's failure to implement Assembly resolution 497 (1981) as well as underscored the need to implement the 1907 Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention with respect to the Syrian Golan, which had been occupied since 1967. It also called on Israel to withdraw to pre-1967 borders. Noting that peace would not be achieved without Israel's serious commitment to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, he called on all to vote in favour of the resolutions in order to end the occupation and to fulfil the Charter's lofty principles.

Statements

VITALY CHURKIN (Russian Federation) recalled that a year ago he had talked about the need to increase the role of the Quartet in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, since a peace settlement was too complex for the parties to carry out without it. But the Quartet had been kept in the dark, and the gulf of mistrust between the two sides had become worse than ever. Following the recent ceasefire, there were few visible prospects for peace. A recent succession of killings had only reaffirmed that the vacuum had been filled by terrorists. Without collective settlement frameworks and decisive involvement by the Security Council it would be very difficult to resolve the stalemate. His Government was convinced that the solution would be found in Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, among other measures, such as restoring unity with the Palestinian Liberation Organization platform. The powers of authority of the Government of National Unity of Palestine would have to be extended throughout the Palestinian territory. Turning to the situation in the Syrian Golan, he said terrorist activity had become catastrophic, with a caliphate strengthening its control over large areas as well as over resources, and improving its ability to use weapons of mass destruction. In the face of the terrorists' threat, the people of the area would have to come together. He placed hope in the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, and the initiative to impose a "firing freeze" in Aleppo. Russian Federation would continue to work with constructive parties, including a faith-based unity Government of Syria.

BASHAR JA'AFARI ([Syria](#)) read out a letter from a Syrian citizen living in the occupied Syrian Golan, which expressed pain provoked by the illegal Israeli occupation. "Our only mistake was that we are protecting our land, the land of our ancestors. We are being subjected to many violations since the first day of occupation which began in June 1967. Our water and hydraulic resources are being stolen as well as our land. Sanctions are imposed on us... The Israeli entity is undermining values of democracy and freedom," he said citing the letter.

Indeed the occupying Power was violating human rights and was conducting arbitrary policies of discrimination and injustice, he said. Recently Israel had added another chapter to its violations, providing support to terrorists in the zone of separation in the Syrian Golan. Latest developments in the region had led the mission there to withdraw from some of its operations temporarily. Israel's support for terrorist groups, associated with Al-Qaida, in the separation zone was a flagrant violation of the separation agreement, of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. Despite requests to put an end to Israeli occupation, no progress had been achieved. Prospects to create a Palestinian State were becoming more remote. Instead of progress towards peace and security, there was another Israeli aggression in Gaza and the exacerbation of violence against Palestinian civilians, leading even European countries to criticize Israel.

HUSSEIN HANIFF ([Malaysia](#)), a co-sponsor of the two resolutions, expressed grave concern about the situation in the Middle East. Member States had a collective responsibility to make sure that the people there could live in peace and stability. He reiterated his support for an independent State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. He again condemned Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian Occupied Territory, and its acts of violence in Gaza in July and August, which left thousands dead and tens of thousands homeless. Member States should not allow the Secretary-General's often quoted remark, "build-destroy, build-destroy cycle," to be turned into a cliché, and rehashed every few years when the situation repeated itself. States should focus on a comprehensive solution, starting with a complete end to acts of violence.

Turning to the situation in Syria, he said the ongoing stability had provided opportunities for other armed terrorist groups like ISIL to take root in the region. He welcomed the appointment of Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to work on developing a peaceful solution to the crisis there, and noted that there had been progress in freezing the fighting in Aleppo. He reiterated his Government's strong rejection of the changing of the physical character, demographics, institutional structure and legal status of the Syrian Golan by the Israeli Government. All measures and actions undertaken by Israel there including the expansion of settlements since 1967 were flagrant violations of

international law and the Charter, and he called for Israel's immediate withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan. His Government was seeking a moderate approach to conflict resolution.

Question of Palestine: Action on Draft Resolutions

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, the representative of Italy, speaking on behalf of the European Union, confirmed its consolidated voting patterns on these resolutions. He put on record that with regard to all resolutions adopted during the Assembly's sixty-ninth session, whenever "Palestinian Government" was mentioned, it referred to the Palestinian Authority. The use of "Palestine" should not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine. The European Union as a whole had not expressed a legal qualification with regard to the terms "forced displacement" used in a number of resolutions.

Also explaining his vote before the vote, the representative of Israel said that the resolutions presented today were outdated and that other countless countries suffered from similar situation. The United Nations had set up a website called the "platform of Palestine", and every year the Organization spent more than \$6 million on a variety of programmes on Palestine. Every year, his delegation asked what those programmes did. He asked what the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People had achieved. It had not inspired the Palestinian people to fight for peace nor had it brought the situation closer to peace. He asked the Assembly to vote with reason and responsibility, to take a stand on a long-lasting solution and to vote against those resolutions.

The Assembly then took up the first draft, titled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" (document A/69/L.21), by which it would request the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. It further would request the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people.

The Assembly adopted the text by a recorded vote of 94 in favour to 7 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, United States), with 56 abstentions.

Next, the Assembly took up the draft resolution on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (document A/69/L.22). By its terms, the Assembly would request that the Division

monitor developments relevant to the question of Palestine, organize international meetings and conferences in various regions, and prepare and widely disseminate publications and information materials on various aspects of the topic as well as develop and enhance the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Government intended for Palestinian capacity-building. The Assembly would also ask the Secretary-General to ensure United Nations system entities continued cooperating with the Division through programme components addressing various aspects of the question of Palestine and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

That text was adopted by a recorded vote of 91 in favour to 7 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, United States), with 59 abstentions.

The Assembly then turned to the draft on the special information programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (document A/69/L.23). By its terms, the Assembly would request the Department Of Public Information to disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine and peace efforts; continue to issue, update and modernize publications and audio visual and online materials; organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel; and continue to provide assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development, in particular through its annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists.

By a recorded vote of 147 in favour to 7 against (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, United States), with 9 abstentions (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Honduras, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu), that text was adopted.

The Assembly then turned to the draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the Question of Palestine (document A/69/L.24), by which it would reiterate its demand for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, stress the need for Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and demand that Israel comply strictly with its obligations under international law. The Assembly would call for the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions as well as would urge Member States to expedite economic, humanitarian and technical aid to the Palestinian people and Government to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Territory and to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure.

Further to the text, the Assembly would call for intensified efforts by the parties toward the conclusion of a final peace settlement, the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow toward that end, and resumption of negotiations based on clear parameters. It would reaffirm its commitment to the two-State solution, stress the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily to self-determination, and the need for a just resolution to the problem of Palestine refugees in line with Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1978, among other things.

The draft was adopted by a recorded vote of 148 in favour to 6 against (Canada, Israel, Marshall Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, United States), with 8 abstentions (Australia, Cameroon, Honduras, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Tonga, Vanuatu).

Speaking in explanation of vote after the votes, the representative of the United States expressed deep concern about the volatile situation in the Middle East, pointing out that her country had worked hard to pave the road for peace. She was troubled by the disproportionate number of resolutions critical of Israel, 18 this year. They undermined the trust needed for peace. She expressed particular concern over the three resolutions on the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee on Palestinian Rights and the Special Committee to Investigate Israel Practices, as they renewed mandates for United Nations bodies formed years ago, did not move the peace process forward and wasted valuable time.

Her country's vote against the resolution on "The Syrian Golan" should not be understood to mean that the United States condoned Israel's settlement activities in the Occupied Territories, she said. Indeed continued settlement activity was inconsistent with Israel's international commitments. Such action only drew criticism from the international community, alienated Arab States with which Israel wanted to improve relations and eroded trust with the Palestinians. In particular she was concerned by the scale and timing of those activities. The parties must resolve the conflict through direct negotiations. Her country stood ready to assist.

The representative of Singapore, also explaining his vote after the vote, said that his country had voted in favour of the text on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the understanding that the reference in the operative paragraph on achieving the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders should be interpreted in the same manner as set out in the relevant operative paragraph of the draft on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,, namely, within recognised pre-1967 borders.

Right of Reply

Speaking in exercise of right of reply, the representative of Israel said that he had intended to speak after the votes on all resolutions, including the two to follow.

Situation in Middle East: Action on Draft Resolutions

The Assembly first took up a draft on Jerusalem (document A/69/L.25), by which it would reiterate its determination that any actions by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administrations on the Holy City of Jerusalem were illegal and therefore null and void, and call upon Israel to immediately cease all such illegal measures. It would stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the City of Jerusalem should take into account the legitimate concerns of both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, as well as stress the need for the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. It would express its grave concern in particular about the recent series of negative incidents in East Jerusalem.

The text was adopted by a recorded vote of 144 in favour to 6 against (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, United States), with 10 abstentions.

Next, the Assembly turned to a resolution on the Syrian Golan (document [A/69/L.26](#)), by which it would declare that Israel had failed so far to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void. It would reaffirm its determination that all relevant provisions of the Regulations annexed to the 1907 Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention continued to apply to the Syrian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, and call upon the parties to respect and ensure respect for their obligations under those instruments in all circumstances.

Further, the Assembly would determine once more that the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan and its de facto annexation constituted a stumbling block to achieving a just, lasting peace in the region and demand once more that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

The Assembly adopted that text by a recorded vote of 99 in favour to 6 against (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, United States), with 57 abstentions.

Speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, the representative of Brazil, also on behalf of Argentina, said the two nations had voted in favour of the resolution on the Syrian Golan, and insisted on the necessity of a negotiated peace to end the occupied Syrian Golan.

The representative of Syria, making a statement after adoption of the vote, said that the votes reflected the support of the members and their refusal of the current situation in the Occupied Territories. It went without saying that the votes sent a clear message to Israel. The occupation, the racial discrimination, and annexations were rejected. He reiterated his gratitude to the States who voted in favour of the resolution on the Syrian Golan. His country was committed to liberate all the territories occupied since 1967 using all means guaranteed by international law.

The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, making a general statement, expressed gratitude to those who had supported the resolutions adopted today. The Assembly had thus sent a strong message in favour of justice, peace and the two-State solution. He respected the rights of all countries, in making decisions to advance justice and peace, even those who voted against those resolutions. He expressed pleasure that this year, there had again been support for all 18 resolutions protecting Palestine. He noted that realization of the two-State solution would fulfil the wish of all. However, to achieve that the one State occupying the other must withdraw. Despite the pain the Palestinian people were experiencing, they did not lose sight of the two-State objective for a Palestinian State on all the territory occupied in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and on the basis of Assembly resolution 194. It would be a State that was viable, contiguous and democratic, living alongside Israel.

Exercising his right of reply, the representative of Israel said that his country was not what was wrong in the Middle East. In response to the comments made by the Lebanese delegate, he said that smuggling arms to terrorists group was the real problem in the Middle East. Regarding the comments made by Saudi Arabia's representative, he said that this country executed people just for having Christian bibles and beheaded numbers of people; that was the real problem in the Middle East. Responding to the comments made by Pakistan's representative, he said that country should fight the radical Islamist factions at home. The thousands of radical Islamists were the real problem in the Middle East. In response to the representative of Qatar, he noted that every rocket sent from Gaza could have had a sign stating "made possible by the State of Qatar". To the delegate of Libya, the representative of Israel said that failed States were the real problem in the Middle East. Concerning the comments made by the delegate of Syria, he said that murders in Syria lied solely on the Syrian Government. The brutal Assad regime was the real problem in the Middle East.

The representative of Iran, responding to the Israel delegate's comments, said that in its effort to clarify "the real problem", Israel's representative had merely been deflecting the issue from itself. The real problem in the region was Israel's illegal policies. The regime was perpetrating heinous crimes against the Palestinian people. The real crime was the occupation. He had voted for all the resolutions to show solidarity with the Palestinian people. The problem had remained unresolved for more than six decades because the root cause, the occupation, was not being addressed.

Exercising his right of reply, the delegate of Syria, in response to the Israeli representative, said that the votes in favour on the resolution demonstrated great support from a majority of Member States. Faced with that situation, the representative of Israel had to present false claims against Member States to defend his country. The Syrian delegate's statement and others were not made to lecture Israel; they highlighted facts based on reports from several bodies of the United Nations. The representative of Israel should "get out of his cocoon" and face the fact that Israel violated international law.

Speaking in right of reply in response to Israel, the representative of Pakistan said his country was at the forefront of the fight against terrorism. The Israeli representative's comments were simply an attempt to divert attention from his country. Perhaps the Israeli representative had forgotten that the question under discussion was the Middle East and not Pakistan.

The representative of Israel, in response to the comments made by Iran's delegate, said that the Iranian media and other sources admitted earlier this week that Iran gave arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Iran was illegally transporting arms in the Middle East. In regards to the comments made by the representative of Syria, he said 220,000 people had been murdered by the Syrian regime; 3.2 million refugees suffered as a result of the atrocities committed by the Syrian Government. In view of those facts, he asked Syria to avoid preaching to Israel about its respect for the Charter and humanitarian law.

The representative of Iran, responding to the representative of Israel, said it was regrettable that Israel criticized people who supported freedom fighters. The baseless allegations made against his country did not hide the list of illegal actions committed by Israel.

The representative of Bolivia stated for the record that he had voted in favour of the people of Palestine on resolutions A/69/L.21 and A/69/L.22.

The representative of Syria, again taking the floor in right of reply, said the representative of the occupation authorities would not refrain from repeating his fictional figures. That representative had been disturbed by his references to the Charter and international law. Evidently that representative had never heard of those documents or “we would not be here” discussing the question of Palestine. All Israel could provide was evidence of its illegal actions.

The representative of China, speaking on a point of order, noted that he had voted in favour of all six draft resolutions. However, due to technical reasons, the Chinese vote on resolution A/69/L.25 was not accurately reflected. A correction was being made and would be reflected in the document to be issued.

For information media. Not an official record.