

*Permanent Observer Mission
of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Statement by Ms. Reem Julia Mansour, Esq., Legal Adviser, before the Sixth Committee, Agenda item 85: The rule of law at the national and international levels, 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 15 October 2015

(Please against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

The rule of law at the national and international levels is of utmost importance to the State of Palestine based on a deep conviction that justice, peace and development can only be promoted via respect for legal obligations at the national and international levels within a recognized and accepted legal framework. In this regard, multilateral treaties play a critical role in the rule of law as they contribute to the strengthening and implementation of the rule of law in our societies and among our nations. They promote the rule of law by bringing clarity and structure to international relationships equally, offering a global order that is more predictable and just for all. Additionally, multilateral treaties are important for social and economic advancement of States, especially those States building and strengthening their legal pillars and are a proven beneficial tool in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Indeed, as set forth in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, there is a clear link between international law and justice on one hand and peace on the other. It also underscores the inalienable rights of peoples to the principles of equality and self-determination. There can be no solid base for international law if these principles are not upheld equally across the board. The overarching goal of multilateral treaties and the process by which they are created is to promote and protect rights and advance friendly relations among the community of nations in order to ensure peace, security and prosperity. In this vein, they are a manifestation of a global will to create a better world.

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption of resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, in which the General Assembly accorded Palestine non-member Observer State status in the United Nations, was a historic decision for the Palestinian people and a pivotal moment in our international standing. Among the first actions undertaken thereafter by the State of Palestine was to accede to the core human rights and international humanitarian law treaties. We listened to the international calls for universality and acceded to over 40

treaties and conventions in 2014 alone, without a single reservation. Our accessions to these multilateral treaties are a manifestation of Palestine's legal sovereignty and an expression of our unwavering commitment to the principles of international law and to the advancement of fundamental freedoms and rights.

At the national level, a Committee was established at the ministerial level to ensure Palestine's compliance with our legal obligations and responsibilities. The Committee engages with the Independent Commission for Human Rights and Palestinian civil society and across relevant government institutions in an inclusive effort to advance the rule of law in our country. Currently, the State of Palestine is preparing reports for submission to various human rights treaty bodies. These reports assess the extent to which Palestine's laws and policies coincide with universal principles and international law. Ultimately, they are shaping our State's legal roadmap through legislative and policy development for the advancement of human rights and the rule of law in Palestine.

Even prior to acceding to international conventions and treaties, the State of Palestine had pledged to respect international law. Our 1988 Declaration of Independence remains one of the most powerful texts in support of universal values, reflecting many international principles. Moreover, Palestine's national policies and practices are aimed at mainstreaming laws that promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinian people. Simultaneously, we are conscious that more work must be done; therefore we will continue our efforts to improve and reform laws governing the fundamental rights of our people, such as women and disability rights, in Palestine. We will also continue to join other international instruments and contribute our part to this international legal effort.

Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably, Palestine's reality consists of a brutal foreign military occupation at the hands of Israel, the occupying Power, which denies the Palestinian people their rights to freedom, dignity, and too often, their right to life, despite the protections provided for in international law. For decades, Israel has completely disregarded every aspect of international law, committing grave breaches and further exacerbating and destabilizing the situation on the ground and entrenching its colonization and occupation of the State of Palestine, with total impunity.

For the rule of law to serve its purpose, there must be compliance with the laws and accountability for breaches. Without accountability, impunity will fuel injustice, defeating the system. The State of Palestine has been at the forefront of efforts to secure accountability and end impunity through active engagement at the United Nations over the decades and now through its accession to international legal instruments, most notably the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As highlighted by the Rome Statute in its preamble, such grave crimes threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world and all States must act to put an end to impunity. It is impunity that has allowed Israel's occupation, in all its forms and manifestations, and its many violations and crimes against the Palestinian people to continue for decades. The State of Palestine must therefore reiterate its demand for an end to the illegal Israeli occupation and expresses its desire for a better future for our people, for our region and for our world.

Justly resolving the question of Palestine is a test of the international community's will to uphold the values this organization was founded on and it is a test the world cannot afford to fail. The State of Palestine will continue to uphold its legal obligations and take every legal, peaceful step necessary, both internationally and nationally, to ensure justice and the rule of law, convinced that only this can ensure the aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and their long struggle to achieve peace, freedom and dignity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.