



PERMANENT
OBSERVER MISSION OF
PALESTINE
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by Mr. Yussef Kanaan, Senior Adviser, Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, before the Committee on Information, 28 April 2010:

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I wish to extend Palestine's sincere congratulations on your assumption as Chair of this Committee, as well as to the distinguished members of the Bureau. We have full confidence in your ability to efficiently steer the Committee's work to success. We also express our appreciation to the UN Secretary-General for his reports on the activities of the Department of Public Information and to the Committee for its thorough report and valuable efforts in this regard. We also express our thanks and appreciation to Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, Under-Secretary General for Communications and Public Information, for his outstanding leadership of the Department and his statement at the outset. We also commend all DPI staff and officers for their valuable efforts and diligent work in implementation of the Department's many important programmes, including the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine.

Before proceeding, I wish to state that Palestine aligns itself with the important and comprehensive statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I wish also to express our profound appreciation to the distinguished delegation of the Sudan for its valuable efforts last year.

Mr. Chairman,

While stressing the historic, permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, my delegation emphasizes the importance of the DPI's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions, the latest being resolution 64/18, which was adopted on 2 December 2009 by an overwhelming majority in reflection of the broad international support for this Programme. We express our deep appreciation to the Member States for their valuable support of this Programme, which is instrumental in raising and promoting the international community's awareness of the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, issues of high priority on the UN agenda, as well as in raising awareness of and support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the efforts to achieve a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions and the principles and well-known terms of reference of the peace process.

P R E S S R E L E A S E

The DPI should be highly commended for carrying out a number of activities in 2009 in connection with its Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine, as detailed in the Secretary-General report, including the organization of the 17th International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, which was held in Rio de Janeiro on 27-28 July 2009. In this connection, we reiterate our gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Brazil for hosting this important seminar which focuses on the important role being played by the media locally, regionally and internationally in informing people about the conflict, shaping public opinion and mobilizing support for the peace process

We also commend the DPI's updating and display of the English version of the permanent exhibit on the Question of Palestine at Headquarters in New York, and the French version at the United Nations at Geneva, as well as the availability of an electronic version of the updated exhibit online. The delegation of Palestine also commends the Department for all of its efforts in the high-level commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on 24 September 2009, as well as the important role played by UN information centers in highlighting this important event..

We also reaffirm the importance of the DPI's work, especially the important and vital role played by the Section on Palestine, to develop the archives of films and videotape documentaries on the history of the Palestine question. The "digitalization" of such important and historical documentary materials is not only useful for the information of the general public, but very beneficial for researchers, academic institutions and others.

I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the Question of Palestine was a distinct link on the UN home page, but after redesigning a new site this title was removed not only from the home page but from news pages and news focus pages and was replaced with the Situation in the Middle East. Stressing the importance of the DPI's Special Programme on the Question of Palestine, we hope that the Department will consider restoring the Question of Palestine link to the UN home page.

Mr. Chairman,

While we fully understand the wide range of human rights-related issues that the Palestine, Decolonization and Human Rights Section will now be responsible for, we wish to place on record our strong hope that this will not interfere with the effective manner in which issues related to the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine are carried out. Up until now, the mandate has not been fully implemented, including, for example, the request by the General Assembly for the DPI to organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel and to expand its collection of audio-visual material on the Question of Palestine. Hence, we hope that the increase in the Section's responsibilities will not affect the implementation of the Section's mandate vis-à-vis the Question of Palestine and that the Section will receive sufficient funding to enable fulfillment of its tasks.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation attaches much importance to DPI's continued provision of assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development through the annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists from the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This training is aimed at strengthening their media skills, which have become increasingly important in our high-tech world with the expansion of online media and the instantaneous and constant reporting on the internet through traditional and non-traditional media forums. Participation in this training programme has been so important for those media practitioners privileged to be selected, despite the obstacles imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, through the severe restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people and the siege imposed on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Regrettably, at a time when all speak of the importance of the role of media in promoting dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli sides, Israel continues its illegal and inhumane practices and actions against the Palestinian people, obstructing daily life and innumerable opportunities for the Palestinian people to develop and progress, including via such important training programmes

Mr. Chairman,

The Israeli occupying forces also regrettably continue to target journalists working tirelessly to convey the grim daily reality and truth about Israel's illegal, aggressive and destructive policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Several Palestinian and foreign journalists reporting on the peaceful non-violent protests in the villages of Bil'in and N'ilin against Israel's illegal construction of the annexation Wall and settlements have been attacked by the Israeli occupying forces, which in March this year declared these villages to be closed military zones. In this regard, we highly commend the United Nations for its production of the documentary "*Walled Horizons*" about Israel's continued illegal construction of the Wall for more than five years since the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, its severe impact on the lives of the Palestinian people in all aspects and about the non-violent protests against this glaring and grave breach of international law. Such visual media serve to truly illustrate the harsh reality and inhumane situation that is being imposed on the Palestinian people as a result of such illegal practices by the occupying Power.

Palestinian and foreign journalists and peace activists will also be affected by the latest Israeli military order, which threatens the deportation of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank and East Jerusalem as well as journalists and international peace activists deemed by the occupying Power to be so-called "infiltrators" or "illegally residing". The international community is called upon to condemn this illegal measure and compel Israel to rescind it. In this connection, in January of this year, Israel detained and deported US journalist Jared Malsin, who had been working for the past two years as an editor with the independent Palestinian News Agency *Ma'an* based in the occupied West Bank city of Bethlehem.

In this regard, we would like to highlight the irony in Israel's false claim of democracy as it openly and officially practices censorship to hide the illegal actions it systematically perpetrates against the people it occupies. We reiterate our call on this distinguished Committee

and relevant international organizations to step up their efforts to protect Palestinian and foreign journalists and ensure that they can work without the repressive limitations of censorship and the threat and danger of military force against them. Israel should be held accountable for all the war crimes it commits against the Palestinian people, including journalists and media personnel.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite Israel's continued attempts, through its illegal policies and practices against the Palestinian people, to undermine international and regional efforts to revive the peace process, we believe that the DPI Programme on the Question of Palestine is instrumental in contributing to the creation of an environment conducive to dialogue and understanding and supportive of the peace process aimed at ending the 1967 Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination in their independent, sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. With this, a lasting, just and comprehensive peace can be achieved, a peace that guarantees for all peoples in the region security and stability and the opportunities to develop and prosper in the region.

Before concluding, Mr. Chairman, I wish to refer to what the Israeli delegate mentioned in his statement regarding the GA resolution on the DPI's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine, and state that what the international community needs is not to change the text of the resolution, but rather for the extremist rightist Israeli government to change its position and put an end to its illegal policies and practices against the Palestinian people, and to faithfully and seriously engage in the peace process and negotiate with the Palestinian side on all final status issues so that security and just, permanent and comprehensive peace can finally be achieved in the Middle East on the basis of international law and UN resolutions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.