

Statement by H.E. Mr. Fodé Seck
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian
People

At the 45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

(Dhaka, Bangladesh, 5-6 May 2018)

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I am honoured to participate in this important meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The OIC is a key partner of the Committee in advocating the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and in promoting a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

Between 2014 and 2017, the Committee and the OIC have jointly organized four International Conferences on the Question of Jerusalem with the aim of ensuring that the focus of the international community on the status of the Holy City will not fade and that a just and sustainable solution of the conflict includes East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. Next month, on 26-28 June, we will jointly convene the fifth such Conference in Rabat, Morocco, on the theme of ***“The Question of Jerusalem after 50 years of Occupation and 25 years of the Oslo Accords”***. I would like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the Committee to the Government of Morocco for hosting this important Conference and invite all OIC Member States to participate. This Conference is particularly relevant given the latest developments which imperil the status of Jerusalem as a final status issue. The conference will focus on the political and social status of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, the Question of Jerusalem in international law and Member States’ obligations, and it will provide a platform for youth in East Jerusalem to inform about the challenges of education and employment under the occupation.

The stalled peace process, the creation of new facts on the ground and unilateral decisions by some Member States to declare Jerusalem the capital of Israel and to relocate their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as early as next week, contravene UN resolutions, including Security Council resolution 478 (1980) and General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-10/19 of 22 December 2017. They irreversibly threaten the establishment of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence are further undermined by the decade-long illegal blockade of Gaza and denial of the right of refugees to return to their homes. In recent weeks, Israeli Defence Forces confronted peaceful demonstrators in Gaza with excessive and disproportionate force, killing at least 41 Palestinian civilians and injuring thousands. Against this bleak backdrop, the international community, particularly the Member States represented here, must stand united and

determined - now more than ever - to overcome obstacles and end the illegal Israeli occupation.

Let me take this opportunity also to remind that today's meeting comes at a particularly sombre time, as May 2018 represents 70 years since the 1948 War, which culminated in the expulsion and flight of up to 800,000 Arab Palestinians from their homes, known as *Al Nakba* ("The Catastrophe"). Next week, on 16-17 May, the Committee will hold a Forum in New York entitled "**70 Years after 1948 – Lessons to Achieve a Sustainable Peace**" to mark the *Nakba* and the ongoing denial of the rights of the Palestinian people.

Excellencies,

The Committee, since its establishment in 1975 by the UN General Assembly, has been advocating for the realization of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, promoting a just and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and mobilizing assistance to the Palestinian people. In this important work, the Committee values its partnership with the OIC. I invite you, your governments and the organizations you represent, to join the Committee and support its mandate and activities in the framework of our shared values and goals.

Thank you very much.



<http://unispal.un.org>



<http://www.twitter.com/UNISPAL>



<http://www.facebook.com/UN.palestinianrights>



<http://www.youtube.com/UNpalestinianrights>