

**Statement by Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices
Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the
Occupied Territories**

**“Special Meeting in Observance of the
International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People”
Trusteeship Council, United Nations, New York
Wednesday, 28th November 2018**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

President of the General Assembly;
Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Excellencies;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies & Gentlemen;

I have the honor to address this Special Meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on behalf of Dr. Rohan Perera, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka and Chair of the *Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practises Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories*.

May I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Cheikh Niang, Permanent Representative of Senegal and Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the kind invitation extended to the Special Committee to address this Special Meeting of the Committee in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Mr. Chairman,

Tomorrow, 29th November 2018, will mark the 71st anniversary of the adoption of Resolution 181 by the United Nations General Assembly and will be the 40th anniversary of The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Both are stark and painful reminders that the urgent need to find a just and peaceful solution to the Question of Palestine, continues to elude us.

In July of this year, the Special Committee visited Amman and met with Palestinian and Israeli civil society representatives, victims and witnesses, as well as Palestinian authorities and UN Officials who briefed the Special Committee on the deteriorating situation of human rights within the occupied Palestinian territories and the occupied Syrian Golan.

These briefings and testimonies have brought to the attention of the Committee, the daily cycle of violence and hardships that the Palestinian people suffer, whose every aspect of life continues to be impacted by the unlawful occupation.

Two weeks ago, the Committee presented its 50th report, pursuant to General Assembly 72/84. The Committee remains concerned about the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; the blockade and closure of Gaza; the lack of accountability; the detention of children and the use of administrative detention and the hostile environment faced by civil society, particularly local Palestinian and Israeli organizations working to promote human rights in the occupied territories.

Mr. Chairman,

Settlement expansion and the demolition of Palestinian homes and destruction of their private property was one of the most frequently cited issues of concern during the meetings the Committee had, that has resulted in displacement of almost 600 hundred Palestinian people in a one year period, of whom half are reported to be children. This also has a direct impact on the escalation of violence in the occupied territories and has contributed to the increase in the number of civilian casualties, including children. The Committee was also informed that demolitions largely carried out on the pretext of lack of building permits were also carried out for punitive reasons. Property provided as humanitarian assistance, such as classrooms for a Bedouin community have also been demolished.

Mr. Chairperson,

The report this year also covers the situation in Gaza, where the Committee is concerned about the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces against demonstrators since the end of March, that continues to date. As of 31 October, the Committee was informed that 228 Palestinians have been killed, including 43 children and over 24,362 have been injured. The Committee strongly condemns the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces.

The blockade and closure of Gaza that enters its twelfth year, remains the most significant obstacle to sustainable recovery and economic development. It has a significant negative impact on the most basic human rights of Gazans, including their right to health, education and freedom of movement. The Committee heard with concern the restrictions on imports to Gaza, and the current electricity crisis. These have severely threatened critical hospital and health clinics, water and sanitation infrastructure and services, that has to provide for nearly two million Palestinians resident in Gaza, of which over half are children. This situation is further exacerbated by UNRWA's unprecedented funding crisis.

We wish to acknowledge the deep appreciation of the work done by UNRWA to continue programmes such as food security support for refugees, despite having to scale down some emergency programmes. The work of UNRWA needs the continuing support and engagement of states through adequate and predictable resources to ensure they can effectively discharge their invaluable mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

The testimonies heard by the Committee this year indicate that Israeli discriminatory practises are increasing, resulting in a rapid deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories.

The Committee expresses serious concern at the use of arbitrary administrative detention, where detainees are held without trial or charges on indefinitely

renewable orders for several months. Of particular concern were reports that arrests of children were on the rise.

The Committee has once again heard about the difficulties faced by human rights defenders, journalists and civil society organizations working on Human Rights issues related to the occupation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Committee underscores the urgent need of reviving the peace process and reiterates support for the two- State solution and joins international calls for a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people.

All parties to the conflict are urged to create the necessary environment to facilitate peace and for mutual confidence-building measures to support efforts to resume dialogue and substantive negotiations. Israel must protect the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Territories and desist from actions that are contrary to the established rules of international law and practice.

We reiterate our support to Security Council resolutions 242 and 497 and the end of occupation of the Occupied Territories; the ceasing of all settlement activities and the implementation of all other UN General Assembly Resolutions regarding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to Statehood, and the attainment of a two state solution based on 1967 borders.

The solidarity of spirit today with the Palestinian people demonstrates that the global community supports a negotiated settlement that would lead to peace. We hope that this solidarity and spirit of goodwill will assist the people of Palestine to work together to preserve national unity, as they strive towards a peace settlement for the creation of a fully sovereign and independent Palestine.

We are heartened that despite the decades of struggle and immense difficulties that the Palestinian people have had to endure, their resolute spirit and strength of

purpose to gain their legitimate rights have prevailed. We take this opportunity to stand united with the Palestinian people, and reaffirm our commitment and steadfast support for the Palestinian cause, as they strive to gain their legitimate rights and aspirations.

On the International Day of the Solidarity with the Palestinian People, let the resilience and endurance of the people of Palestine inspire us to rededicate our collective efforts to forge a peaceful settlement of the Question on Palestine.

Thank you.