

Message by H.E. Mr. Cheikh NIANG
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
2018 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East

Moscow, 5-6 September 2018

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations General Assembly's Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation for hosting this Seminar.

I would also like to commend the Department of Public Information for organising this event around such a timely theme in Moscow, a major media hub, where our Committee held a conference in 2015 that was marked by unprecedented interest by local and international media.

The Committee welcomes ongoing efforts by the Russian Federation, a key global player and a permanent member of the Security Council, in support of a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue.

In this regard, we commend the Russian Authorities for trying to bring the two sides to the table, in order to contribute to a lasting solution to the conflict, on the basis of the internationally recognized parameters and UN relevant resolutions.

Our Committee, comprised of 50 Member States and Observers representing different regional groups, is dedicated to a common objective: a just, comprehensive and lasting two-State solution that brings an end to the occupation of Palestine and attains Palestinians' legitimate rights to self-determination, independence and return, in accordance with UN resolutions and international law.

This includes the return of all occupied Palestinian territories, the respect of the Palestinian frontier before 1967, as well as Jerusalem East as the capital of the Palestinian State. Our Committee is neither anti-Israeli nor pro-Palestinian, it is pro-peace and pro-international law.

Besides mobilising support through meetings, briefings and other events at the United Nations Headquarters and contributing to the capacity-building of Palestinian civil servants, our Committee organizes conferences and delegation visits throughout the year to advocate for Palestinian rights. For example, in November of last year, our Committee organized a lecture in New York on the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and the impact it has had on the Palestinian people, given by Columbia University Professor Rashid Khalidi.

To mark the anniversary of the 1948 War and subsequent uprooting and mass displacement of Palestinians, the Committee convened this May a two-day Forum "70 Years after 1948 – Lessons to Achieve a Sustainable Peace" also at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In June of this year, we convened an international conference, supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, under the theme "The Question of Jerusalem after 50 years of Occupation and 25 years of the Oslo Accords" in Morocco. All these events are open to the media and feature press conferences, and you can watch them on our website, UNISPAL.

All too often journalists are targeted by those who do not want truth to be told, who do not want the world to witness violations of human rights and wish to invalidate the facts as they happen on the ground. We all want to see a safe environment where independent journalism can be practiced free from commercial, political and ideological pressures.

Some soul-searching would not be out of place: journalism, these days and especially when it comes to such controversial issues such as the question of Palestine, seems sometimes locked into irreconcilable "narratives" which hurts its credibility. We are equally aware that social media can build bridges of peace, but if not managed responsibly it can also be a vehicle for fuelling extremism through hate speech.

I would encourage you to learn more about the work of the Committee on our website. It is worth noting that a new and more user-friendly UN website on “The Question of Palestine” has been relaunched. The website provides easy access to the work and activities of our Committee as well as all relevant information from the United Nations and other international and civil society organizations from 1947 to the present day.

I invite you to join our Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms and work jointly to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East, and to mobilize all constituencies for peace at the grass roots level while the two-State solution still has a chance. You, as media, and we in the Committee have our roles to play in this regard.

Thank you.



<http://unispal.un.org>



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



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



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