

Check against delivery

Statement to the Security Council by Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

New York, 18 October 2018

Mr. President,

I would like, at the outset, to commend Bolivia for its leadership of the Security Council this month and also for its unwavering and principled support for the Palestinian cause and the two-state solution, as demonstrated by its 2010 recognition of the State of Palestine and throughout its tenure on the Council.

Mr. President,

As we gather at this quarterly open debate, we once again appeal to this august body to act and redress the ever-deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This is all the more urgent because 70 years since the Arab-Israeli war, and 51 years into the Israeli occupation, there is still no clear prospect, at this point, of bringing an end to the injustice being endured by the Palestinian people and achieve a just, lasting and peaceful solution.

The ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements, in grave violation of resolution 2334 (2016) and numerous other resolutions, is an encroachment, not only of the contiguity of the Palestinian territory, but also of the basic rights of the Palestinian People. Similarly, unilateral actions by some governments are gravely jeopardizing the international consensus on the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, including in regard to Jerusalem, which is among the core final status issues.

In this context, the occupying Power also persist with its attempts to forcibly displace Palestinian civilians and seize Palestinian land to facilitate its illegal activities. In this regard, we deplore the plans to demolish a Bedouin hamlet in Khan al-Ahmar - Abu al Helu, which is yet another unacceptable move, in grave violation of international humanitarian law, shown by the strong international outcry.

In the Gaza Strip, the socio-economic situation was recently described by the World Bank as being in “free fall”. The humanitarian situation is dire and deteriorating rapidly, carrying the risk of military escalation.

The Committee reiterates its call on Israel to lift this illegal 11-year old blockade and urges Palestinian factions to reach and implement a reconciliation agreement to avert the further decline of conditions and ensure the unity of the Palestinian people.

The Committee commends UNRWA and its staff, whose lives are often at great risk, and renews its urgent appeal to all Member States to sufficiently and predictably fund UNRWA to ensure the continuity of its vital programmes for the well-being, development and protection of the Palestine refugees, in accordance with its mandate.

Mr. President,

The stalled peace process has only exacerbated the current situation. While the international community remains paralyzed, demonstrations continue across the Palestinian territory, including in Jerusalem and at the Gaza fence, with the toll of Palestinian civilian casualties steadily rising, including among children.

The Committee firmly believes that violence will not resolve this conflict and supports efforts to create an expanded multilateral framework for negotiations to revive the peace process based on the longstanding terms of reference and to create a credible political horizon leading to the two-state solution.

We are facing an impasse in the way we collectively take our responsibility vis-à-vis the Charter and each other. The impunity with which eighty-six Security Council and 705 General Assembly resolutions are violated daily by the occupying Power are a threat to the credibility of the entire United Nations and the rule of law.

A few weeks back, during the General Debate, most world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism and stressed the central role of the UN in resolving the Palestinian question. As of today, 139 countries have recognized the State of Palestine and others – namely in the European Union - have expressed their intention to do so if progress in negotiations continue to stall.

The Committee encourages all Member States that have recognized one of the two States, i.e. Israel, to now also recognize the other, Palestine, without delay, to demonstrate their commitment to international legitimacy and the two-State solution.

As testament of the support and recognition it enjoys throughout the world, the State of Palestine has been elected to chair the G-77 and China in 2019.

For the very future of our collective action, we need to do more to close the gap between words and deeds. We cannot stand idle before the terrible ongoing historical injustice suffered by the Palestinian People. We must become the actors that achieve the two-State solution and make a just peace a reality.
