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Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 39 (continued)

Question of Palestine

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/73/35)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/346)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/201)

Draft resolutions (A/73/L.31, A/73/L.32, A/73/L.33 and A/73/L.34)

Mr. Yaakob (Malaysia): At the outset, my delegation wishes to thank the Permanent Representative of Senegal for having introduced yesterday (see A/73/PV.42) the four draft resolutions contained in documents A/73/L.31, entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”; A/73/L.32, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”; A/73/L.33, entitled “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat”; and A/73/L.34, entitled “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”. We also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Malta for introducing the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/73/35) at yesterday’s meeting.

As in previous years, Malaysia is pleased to co-sponsor the four important draft resolutions under this agenda item, which remain critical in highlighting

the important aspects of the question of Palestine, in accordance with the long-standing principles on Palestine, supported by the international community. More than 70 years have elapsed since the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), which provided for the partition of Palestine, ostensibly predicated on the establishment of two sovereign States. Unfortunately, the establishment of only one State — Israel — was brought to fruition in 1948.

In the intervening decades, Israel has sought to extinguish the legitimate right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. The civilian population of the occupied Palestinian territories continues to endure repression at the hands of Israel, which persists in its flagrant violations of international law. The adoption of the Jewish nation-State law in July 2018, the aggressive expansion of Israeli settlements and the relentless disproportionate use of force against unarmed civilians involved in the Great March of Return are but recent examples of a long-standing pattern of systematic abuse meted out against the oppressed people of Palestine.

Efforts towards the establishment of an independent State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders will remain an integral part of the foreign policy framework of the new Malaysian Administration. Malaysia has consistently advanced a principled position on this matter in various international forums, including during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2015 and 2016. For example, on 23 December 2016, Malaysia, together with New Zealand, Senegal and Venezuela, worked towards the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), which signified a major breakthrough

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for the Palestinian cause. The resolution affirms that Israel's establishment of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law. The resolution also calls, *inter alia*, for the cessation of all Israeli settlement activities and the reversal of negative trends on the ground that prejudice the realization of a two-State solution.

Unfortunately, Israel's illegal conduct has continued unabated, to the great detriment of Palestinians. It is indeed tragic that the interests of innocent civilians, including women and children, have long been superseded by extraneous factors that render the major Powers unable or unwilling to hold Israel accountable for its actions.

Notwithstanding the asymmetries in military power and political influence between Israel and Palestine, the moral persuasiveness and steadfastness of the latter's struggle remain undiminished. Even in the most turbulent of times, the Palestinian people remain resilient, retaining hope for a future in which they will assume their rightful place as a full and equal member of the community of nations. Their aspirations should not be denied any longer.

Malaysia continues to believe that a two-State solution, in which the Palestinians and the Israelis live side by side in peace, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, is the only viable solution to this long-standing conflict. Malaysia remains firmly committed to concerted multilateral efforts aimed at ending the longest occupation in modern history through the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine. The international community's demand of Israel is very simple: comply with all relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as relevant international law.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the Permanent Representatives of Senegal and Malta in their respective capacities as Chair and Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see A/73/PV.42).

It is an honour to share with and read out to the Assembly the message of President Daniel Ortega Saavedra and First Lady and Vice-President Rosario Murillo to commemorate the International Day of

Solidarity with the Palestinian People, addressed to our friend Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine.

“My esteemed brother, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on behalf of the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the people of Nicaragua, Rosario and myself, I wish to extend to you our most sincere expression of solidarity with the heroic Palestinian people, while reaffirming our full support for their tireless struggle for freedom and the full exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination, including the establishment of a Palestinian State, based on the pre-4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We pay tribute today to the life, legacy, steadfastness and conviction of our very dear brother, President Yasser Arafat, leader of the struggle for the liberation of Palestine, and to his commitment to the Palestinian people. We remember his historic visit to Nicaragua in July 1980.

“Comrade President Mahmoud Abbas, we personally commend you and call attention to your steadfast struggle, while advocating diplomacy and negotiations, as well as the holding of an international conference to find a solution to the question of Palestine, which we welcome. Nicaragua believes that achieving peace and stability in the Middle East is feasible through negotiations and the full implementation of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine, in particular Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), of December 2016, which are the legal instruments based on international law to achieve peace and stability in the region. Our peoples enjoy a very special and historical relationship, and, together with the rest of the international community, we deem it necessary to step up efforts to realize the establishment of the Palestinian State through peaceful means, thereby ensuring just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

“With everlasting affection and love, we once again express the greetings of the Sandinista movement and are certain that, over time, our eternally brotherly peoples will continue to strengthen those fraternal and revolutionary bonds, which have united us in our resolve for a better world.”

Mr. Pirez Pérez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the representative of Malta for introducing (see A/73/PV.42) the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/73/35).

We express our unwavering solidarity and support to the Palestinian Government and people for the accession of Palestine as a full State Member of the United Nations. Cuba reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and its commitment to continue supporting them in the legitimate struggle for justice, dignity and peace, as our Foreign Minister made clear in his message of solidarity to the Palestinian people yesterday on behalf of the Cuban Government and people.

Cuba also reiterates its demand to immediately end the prolonged and illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and the blockade of the Gaza Strip that has lasted for more than a decade. A two-State solution and a comprehensive, just, peaceful and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question will not be possible as long as Israel continues to violate international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

Cuba expresses its deep concern about the situation in the Middle East region, which is plagued by violence, interference in internal affairs, foreign aggression and long-standing conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is time to settle historical debts with the State of Palestine and restore the inalienable rights of its people, which have been violated by Israel during 50 years of occupation, repression, collective punishment, the destruction and confiscation of Palestinian land and property, forced displacements and colonialist settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Cuba reiterates in the strongest terms its rejection of Israel's use of disproportionate and indiscriminate force against Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem and particularly the Gaza Strip, in grave and flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law. We condemn once again the illegal construction and expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory and the demolition and seizure of Palestinian property. All such measures,

together with the blockade of the Gaza Strip, violate the Fourth Geneva Convention and weaken the viability of a two-State solution.

We reiterate our unconditional support for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the establishment of two States, that would allow the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and enjoy an independent and sovereign State within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and the right of return for refugees. We reject the unilateral action taken by the United States to establish diplomatic representation in the city of Jerusalem, thereby further increasing tensions in the region.

Cuba once again calls for Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian Golan and all other occupied Arab territories. We recall that any measure or action aimed at modifying the legal, physical and demographic status and institutional structure of the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as Israel's measures to exercise its jurisdiction and administration in that territory, constitute violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Lastly, we call for respect for multilateralism and the Charter, and for an end to interference in the internal affairs of others, foreign aggression and the sponsorship of terrorist groups to foment instability and conflict in the Middle East, as well as the invention of pretexts and rationales in an attempt to legitimize the unilateral use of force and aggression against sovereign States.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. I also thank the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for his statement (see A/73/PV.42). I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the valuable efforts of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information.

Amid the dangerous crises throughout the Middle East that have been the focus of the United Nations, the Palestinian question remains the core and longest-standing issue that the General Assembly has been considering. This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the Nakba — the Palestinian catastrophe — the tragic repercussions of which the Palestinians continue to suffer. Over the past seven decades, that issue has been a hallmark at the international level, leading to

the complete rejection by the international community of the Israeli occupation and illegal settlements, as well as violations of international law and the rights of the Palestinian people. The international community has also shown its full solidarity with the Palestinian people's efforts to exercise their inalienable rights. As members of the international community, we must continue to shoulder our responsibilities with regard to that issue until a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement is reached. That would have a positive impact on regional and international peace and security.

The State of Qatar reiterates its support for international efforts aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East and settling the Palestinian question, based on the agreed terms of reference, the international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as the principle of the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security within the 1967 borders; an end to the Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan; ensuring all rights of the Palestinian people; and achieving a just solution to the issue of refugees, in accordance with resolution 194 (III).

The various annual resolutions on the Palestinian question and the Middle East adopted by the General Assembly have enjoyed long-standing international unanimity with respect to the various aspects of that issue, which highlights the importance of respect for the principles of international law and the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. It calls for a complete halt to all Israeli settlement activities and unilateral measures in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. Such measures run contrary to international law and aim to change the legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem.

The situation in the Gaza Strip is worrisome, as the humanitarian situation suffered by its population is deteriorating as a result of the unjust blockade, now entering its eleventh year. The State of Qatar is deeply committed to providing humanitarian assistance. In that regard, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, has ordered the provision of urgent assistance in the amount of \$150 million to alleviate the difficult situation in Gaza and ensure the necessary supply of fuel for producing electricity. His efforts are part of the State of Qatar's resolve to play a positive role in promoting stability, which is a prerequisite to establishing peace.

As the issue of the Middle East persists, so does the need to continue the work of the various relevant United Nations organs, agencies and programmes, most notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which is one of the oldest and largest United Nations agencies that plays an essential role in supporting millions of Palestinian refugees. The State of Qatar has stepped up its financial assistance to UNRWA by providing it with \$50 million dollars this year, which contributed to the timely annual opening of UNRWA schools.

In conclusion, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we reaffirm the State of Qatar's full solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people. We underscore once again that the State of Qatar will pursue its commitment to promoting their legitimate rights and supporting efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, based on international terms of reference and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, while striving to end all the conflicts being endured by the peoples of the region.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): We join others in reaffirming our delegation's commitment to the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine on the auspicious occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We reiterate our principled support for draft resolutions A/73/L.31, A/73/L.32, A/73/L.33 and A/73/L.34, which are before us today.

We support the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and their long struggle for peace and justice. Our unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and their legitimate aspiration to an independent State of Palestine, based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, stems from our constitutional obligation.

Bangladesh condemns the heinous attacks on the people of Palestine and denounces the illegal settlements, including the expansion plans, and any other action by the occupying force that obstructs negotiations towards a viable two-State solution. The human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories remains a grave concern for the world community and the Organization. Foreign occupation, which has subjected the Palestinian people to gross and systematic human rights violations and untold pain and

suffering, remains one of the root causes of conflicts and other scourges around the world.

Bangladesh urges the comity of nations to prevail upon Israel to immediately halt its illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, lift the blockade in the Gaza Strip and put an end to all forms of occupation and violence. We remain concerned over the total disregard by Israel of the provisions of Security Council resolution 2234 (2016). Immediate priority must be given to ensuring international protection for the Palestinian people, who have suffered for decades from the occupying Power's policy of collective punishment.

The continued breaches of international humanitarian law and systematic human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories have given rise to an egregious culture of impunity. In the absence of effective international accountability, the occupying Power continues to persecute Palestinian civilians, imprison and abuse scores of Palestinians in its detention centres, and dispossess and evict thousands of Palestinian families through its unlawful construction and expansion of settlements.

Bangladesh continues to insist on the lifting of the illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, which has created a dire humanitarian situation. Provocative policies and legal measures concerning occupied East Jerusalem and the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque must be reversed in deference to the relevant United Nations resolutions and international public opinion. We reaffirm the overriding importance of preserving the question of East Jerusalem as a final-status issue in the peace process. We reiterate the Assembly's assertion that any decision or action that seeks to alter the character, status or demographic composition of the holy city of Jerusalem has no legal effect, is null and void and must be rescinded in compliance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

We reiterate our concern over the prolonged uncertain situation endured by millions of Palestinian refugees in a number of host countries. We reaffirm the need to ensure enhanced, predictable and sustainable funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We call upon Member States in a position to do so to enable UNRWA to discharge its mandate in a meaningful manner.

Bangladesh believes that if a lasting peace for the people and the State of Palestine is to be achieved, the

timely implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the efforts made by the Quartet is of paramount importance. We thank Egypt for its recent initiatives aimed at de-escalating tension in the region. As Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Council of Foreign Ministers, we will continue to work with the international community for a resolution of the Palestinian question.

Before concluding, let me quote from the message delivered by my Prime Minister on the occasion of this year's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

“We must not let the hope of peace fade away. We must, and I believe we will, resume the peace process without any further delay. We urge all concerned to be pragmatic in their approach and work together, hand in hand, for the establishment of an independent homeland for the Palestinian people where they can live in peace and in dignity side by side with their neighbours.”

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude for the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to uphold the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people in order to enable them to exercise their rights, which are guaranteed by the relevant international resolutions.

Today marks the seventieth anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, or what is known as the Day of Al-Nakba. Seventy years have elapsed since the greatest humanitarian disaster in the world. It was embodied by the expulsion of the owners of the land, the accordance of rights to those who did not have them and the deprivation of the rights of their lawful holders. Seventy years have elapsed since the displacement of an entire people from their homeland, their properties seized and their homes demolished. Seventy years have elapsed and the Palestinian people continue to suffer alienation from their homeland and the loss of families. Seventy years have elapsed and the Palestinian people continue to suffer the consequences of an occupation that does not respect any international, ethical or human law.

It is regrettable that the occupation remains an issue of debate in this century. The Arab-Israeli conflict remains the most protracted current conflict in the Arab region, with all its miseries, pains and violations

against humanity. Nothing justifies the continuation of that conflict, as the international community has reached consensus vis-à-vis the need to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in line with the Arab Peace Initiative, which was submitted by my country and recognized by the States of the world, and the relevant international resolutions.

Through its repeated aggressions and violations, Israel has demonstrated that it considers itself to be above the law. It fails to respect international resolutions and benefits from the silence of the international community by not addressing its war crimes, including the unjust blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, which has aggravated the humanitarian situation there. Not satisfied merely with building the apartheid wall, which runs counter to all democratic and humanitarian values, Israel has also adopted the Jewish nation-State law, which publicly consecrates racism and discrimination against the Palestinian people, who are the rightful landowners and right holders.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns Israeli violations and reaffirms its complete rejection of all Israeli policies, practices and plans that are illegal, null and void. We reject Israeli attempts to practise racial discrimination against the Palestinian people, erase their national identity and infringe on their legitimate rights. My country also strongly condemns the illegal Israeli practices of constructing settlements on territories of the State of Palestine occupied since 1967. Israel also expands existing settlements so as to jeopardize any remaining possibility of achieving the two-State solution. Moreover, such settlement practices constitute a flagrant breach of international law and the relevant international charters, conventions and resolutions.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia attaches paramount importance to the Palestinian question. For us, it is the uppermost issue, as confirmed by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, during the Arab League Summit, also known as the Jerusalem Summit, held in Dhahran in April. The Assembly recalls our honourable stance towards the Palestinian people. The Kingdom stresses the importance of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East as a strategic means of ending the Arab-Israeli conflict, in line with the two-State solution, the international terms of reference

and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which ensures the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and of putting an end to the Israeli occupation of all Arab territories, including the Syrian Arab Golan and the Lebanese territories.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sponsor of the draft resolutions before us, concerning Palestine, and will vote in favour of them, as they embody the position of the Kingdom towards supporting the Palestinian question. We believe in the right of the brotherly Palestinian people to an independent State that fulfils their dreams and ambitions.

We are stunned by the attempts of Israel and its allies to submit a draft resolution that seeks to divert attention from the core of that issue. The core of the Palestinian question is the occupation and the blockade — nothing else. Therefore, draft resolutions submitted to divert attention from the suffering of the Palestinian people and from the unjust practices carried out by Israel are merely attempts to justify the occupation. Those attempts are not accepted or permitted by the General Assembly.

Mr. Bessedik (Algeria): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important annual debate on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

My delegation would also like to express its deep appreciation to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for recommending the four draft resolutions before us, and to thank the Chair and the Rapporteur for their introductions, as well as for the introduction of the Committee's annual report (A/73/35).

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, my delegation wishes to express, in its national capacity, its serious preoccupation with the continued systematic pattern of violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and of other Arabs in the occupied territories. The expansion of Israeli settlement activities, along with the brutality of the Israeli settlers, the Israeli exploitation of the natural resources of the occupied Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan Heights, the confiscation of land, the demolition of homes and the displacement of Palestinian civilians, are in violation of international law, international humanitarian law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. That includes the segregation, isolation

and obstruction of Palestinian movement by numerous measures, including annexation, the apartheid wall, the permit regime, hundreds of checkpoints and the systematic collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population.

My delegation condemns the abuses that detainees and prisoners, including children, suffer in detention centres. My delegation condemns the excessive use of force by the occupying Power and the application of the death penalty. My delegation condemns Israeli institutions in which Palestinians have no representation. Two examples of that injustice are Israel's brutal, illegal, oppressive and destructive policies in the recent protests in Gaza and its plans for Khan Al-Ahmar, a Palestinian shepherding community. Some 200 people live in Khan Al-Ahmar, just a few kilometres east of Jerusalem, in an area where Israel has long endeavoured to minimize the Palestinian presence and expand settlements. Israel plans to raze the entire community, claiming that all structures were built illegally. But how could it be otherwise, since Palestinians cannot obtain building permits? Palestinians are not inherently law-breakers, as suggested by Israel.

The Gaza Strip, with a population of nearly 2 million, has essentially become an open-air prison. The Israeli-imposed blockade, which has continued for 11 years, has led to economic collapse, soaring unemployment rates, polluted drinking water and deep despair. Since 30 March, more than 5,000 Palestinians have been injured by live Israeli gunfire and more than 170 killed, including 31 minors, according to the briefing by the Executive Director of the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem before the Security Council on 18 October (see S/PV.8375).

In addition to those violations, since 1967 Israel has continued, as the occupying Power, to violate the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949. Yet Israel enjoys impunity. It is pertinent to mention here that the international community is in favour of protecting civilians and bringing an end to Israeli practices and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions.

Despite the numerous calls of the international community on Israel to cease its illegal policies and measures, the world still bears witness to the persistence of the Israeli occupier's policy of settlements on Palestinian land and the application of group

punishment through the blockade in Gaza, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Israeli settlement activities on Palestinian land, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and in the Syrian Golan Heights, are a violation of international law, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which in paragraph 1:

“[r]eaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace”.

Security Council resolution 497 (1981) confirms the same situation regarding the Syrian Golan Heights, stating in paragraph 1:

“the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect”.

The ongoing Israeli practices and violations, in particular settlements, are major obstacles to the two-State solution. We urge the international community to fulfil its obligations towards the Palestinian people, who have been denied the benefit of human rights for more than 70 years. The international community must exert pressure on Israel to freeze all settlement activities on Palestinian land and in the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights.

Finally, we reject any possible attempts to harm the integrity of long-standing General Assembly resolutions reaffirming the Palestinian people's inalienable rights and the core principles and internationally endorsed parameters for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in line with international law, the relevant resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Mr. Mamdouhi (Islamic Republic of Iran): For the past 70 years, the question of Palestine has been not only an Islamic-Arabic issue but also one of the most complicated political and legal issues at the regional and international levels. During this time, the people of Palestine have experienced nothing but oppression, displacement, misery and occupation of their lands. They have always been deprived of their basic and inalienable rights.

This year, which marks the seventieth anniversary of the tragic Nakba of the Palestinian people in 1948, the military aggression against peaceful demonstrations by Palestinian civilians in Gaza has led to the death of more than 170 martyrs and the injury of thousands more Palestinian citizens. Since its creation, the occupying regime has ignored international law and defied the decisions of international institutions, including many resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It has violated other international legal instruments through its actions as it continues to commit numerous war crimes, carry out its apartheid policy, commit massive and systematic violations of human rights, sponsor State terrorism, expand settlements and displace an ever-increasing number of Palestinians.

We note with grave concern the latest disturbing developments in the occupied Palestinian territories, as reflected in the document under consideration today (A/73/346). The injustices have continued for more than seven decades through systematic and unabated violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people, including the demolition of homes, the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, the arrest and detention of Palestinians, including children, persistent acts of violence, and terror and provocations committed by Israeli settlers and extremists at sensitive religious sites, in particular the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In fact, the occupation of Palestinian territories lies at the heart of the protracted situation of crisis in the Middle East. The Israeli regime's criminal acts against the Palestinians and other peoples of the region are currently the gravest threat posed to regional and international peace and security. Peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved through the promotion of a discriminatory policy of blind support for the Israeli regime's occupation, torture, annihilation, intimidation and aggression.

Likewise, Israel continues to flout all international regimes that govern weapons of mass destruction by refusing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. Nuclear weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime pose the most serious threat to the security of all States of the Middle East.

As pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, the wrongful and unwise decision of the President of the United States, concerning Al-Quds, issued on 6 December 2017, in which he announced his intention to relocate the United States Embassy

to Al-Quds, was severely condemned as a naked and immoral aggression against the rights of the Palestinian people, as well as a provocative action that is apt to push the region into greater violence and anarchy. Emboldened by the United States decision and a number of other changes in the political landscape, the Israeli regime now seems to have decided to totally negate any Palestinian right to statehood.

As has been the case for decades, the situation in Palestine requires urgent international action and attention. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that any solution to the crisis requires the termination of the occupation, crimes and violations committed by the Israeli regime; the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination; and the establishment of their independent and viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Regarding the occupation of the Golan by the Israeli regime, we consider the Golan to be an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. We condemn all measures taken by the illegitimate occupying Power to undermine the territorial integrity of Syria, and we express our deep concern over the grave deterioration of the human rights situation and the increase in the number of illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

In conclusion, I would like once again to reiterate our unwavering commitment to a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and to the immediate restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and to their independent and viable State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. In that regard, we maintain our support for the Palestinian people in their rightful and legitimate struggle against the occupation and for their just quest to exercise their right to self-determination.

Mr. Atlassi (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chair, Mr. Cheikh Niang, for the Committee's valuable and tireless efforts to support justice for the Palestinian people and oversee its various programmes designed to enable the Palestinian people to achieve the just, legitimate, national and sovereign independence they deserve.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which occurs on 29 November,

presented His Majesty King Mohammed VI with another opportunity this year to send a message of solidarity to the Chair of the Committee, reiterating his full support for the Palestinian people and their leaders, first and foremost, His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas. In that letter, he also expresses the full, steadfast and lasting support of the Kingdom of Morocco for the historical and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, most notably their right to form an independent State that is based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and that is stable and viable, living side by side with Israel in peace, security and safety in accordance with international resolutions.

The Kingdom of Morocco, whose King presides over the Al-Quds Committee, is following with great concern the escalation that Israel has chosen to pursue in Palestine in general, and Jerusalem in particular, to undermine the legal status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif as defined in resolutions of international legitimacy, which consider it to be an inseparable part of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

In that regard, Israel seeks religious and ideological conflicts through the temporal and spatial partitioning of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, as well as repeated, systematic violations against the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and its worshippers, while intensifying settlement activities, including in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, in violation of Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2334 (2016). In his letter, His Majesty the King of Morocco asserts that:

“[t]he Moroccan people’s relationship with Palestine, and in particular Al-Quds, is neither new nor fortuitous. It is an emotional relationship that is deeply rooted in the imagination of Moroccans, as individuals and as a nation. Moroccan pilgrims travelling to Mecca and Medina used to visit the holy city of Al-Quds — the first of the two kiblans and home to the third holy mosque — given the city’s religious and spiritual significance. No wonder then that many of them, including scholars, mystics and merchants, chose to settle in Al-Quds and protect the holy places there.”

The issue of Al-Quds and the Palestinian question have always been our major concern for the following reasons. We are committed to and responsible for a just and legitimate cause. The Palestinian question is a central issue in the Middle East and the core conflict in the region. Achieving a just, comprehensive and

lasting peace on the basis of the two-State solution and in accordance with Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative is a strategic choice, not a political manoeuvre. The issue of Al-Quds has special significance not only to the Arab and Muslim Ummah — given that the holy city is home to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque — but also to all peace-loving people, given that the city stands for tolerance and interfaith coexistence. Any unilateral action affecting Al-Quds is unacceptable, illegal and illegitimate in that it represents a serious violation of international law, including General Assembly resolutions and Security Council resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980), as well as the “Uniting for Peace” resolution ES-10/19, adopted in 2017 at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

Resolving the Palestinian question on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy would deprive extremist and terrorist groups of their arguments, especially as they have been exploiting the lack of prospects for the settlement of the Palestinian question and that of Al-Quds, using it as a pretext to justify their criminal agenda in the region. The illegal measures concerning Al-Quds fuel religious sentiment, given the spiritual character of the holy city, with the potential risk of turning a political conflict into a religious one. That would be extremely dangerous for international peace and security and for the desired harmony and coexistence between different cultures and civilizations.

His Majesty the King of Morocco has confirmed that it is not enough to talk about Palestine without addressing the suffering of the Palestinian people. Morocco is aware of the difficult conditions that Palestinians in Gaza are facing. In 2009 and 2014, His Majesty ordered airlifts of medical and food assistance based on our policy of solidarity, which is a cornerstone of Morocco’s foreign policy. This year during Ramadan, His Majesty personally oversaw the launch of a humanitarian initiative in Gaza, Al-Quds and Ramallah.

His Majesty has also established a field hospital of the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces in the Gaza Strip. That hospital offers various medical services. His Majesty has underscored that

“[t]hose initiatives, which are for the benefit of our Palestinian brothers, complement our actions that we undertake as Chairperson of the Al-Quds

Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. We carry out bilateral political and diplomatic activities and in international forums, as well as through field work undertaken by the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency. This operational and field mechanism of the Al-Quds Committee works under our personal supervision to carry out concrete plans and projects for the benefit of our Jerusalemite brothers, with the aim of maintaining the cultural identity of the holy city and improving the social and living conditions of the inhabitants of Al-Quds, while supporting their struggle and encouraging them to remain in Al-Quds”.

The only correct way to resolve the Palestinian question is not by war, bloodshed and the killing of innocent civilians. Rather, it is by returning in good faith to the negotiating table within a clear framework to achieve the two-State solution, with two States living side by side in peace, harmony, security, coexistence and cooperation. Morocco’s position on this conflict remains firm and is based on the Arab Peace Initiative, the agreed terms of reference and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the 4 June 1967 borders.

Therefore, the international community is now more than ever called on to work to mobilize the peace process in accordance with the agreed time frame and based on international foundations and principles. Morocco is ready to engage very actively with all initiatives aimed at moving the peace process forward and arriving at a settlement that would achieve security and stability in the region.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting on a date of particular significance to the people of the State of Palestine and of Israel.

On 29 November 1947, the Assembly determined the establishment of two States, Israel and Palestine. On numerous occasions, my delegation and others participating in the regular open debates held by the Security Council on the question of Palestine have said that our meetings are of an almost ritual nature. It is so, and it has become so. The date of 29 November is a day not of celebration but of frustration and sadness because 71 years after it was made, that commitment has not been fulfilled, and that failure can be measured in the lives of human beings and in deprivations of all kinds.

In those 71 years, my country has held an unwavering position and will continue to do so because it is a position of principle. We recognize all the efforts made throughout those years by the various agencies of the United Nations, the special representatives and coordinators, as well as the various Member States involved. We must also reiterate our call for an end to violence, no matter where it comes from, and the need for Palestinian reconciliation and genuine dialogue between Palestine and Israel.

The deplorable acts of violence and deprivation persist unchanged. The humanitarian crisis, food dependency, the destruction of infrastructure and the deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinians continue. We continue to observe violations of the norms of international law, international humanitarian law and in particular the rights of Palestinian children. That represents a complete failure to comply with Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which remains the only guarantee of the existence of two States.

On 24 December 2010, my country was one of the first to recognize the State of Palestine, and we went on to become a sponsor of resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, which recognized Palestine’s new status as a non-member observer State. We therefore reiterate our full commitment to the spirit and nature of all the relevant General Assembly resolutions, which have consistently upheld the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and our belief that any measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its legislation, jurisdiction or administration in the holy city of Jerusalem are illegal and consequently devoid of any validity.

We also support the ongoing work within the framework of the United Nations to ensure the right of all Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, as affirmed and provided for in numerous General Assembly resolutions, most recently resolution 72/81, adopted in December of last year. Ecuador urges the international community to make concrete progress in supporting a lasting, just political solution for both parties, based on the existence of two States, Palestine and Israel, as the only pathway to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East, assure the Palestinian people of their full rights and realize the establishment of an independent State of Palestine incorporated into the United Nations as a full-fledged member, as set out in the 1947 resolution on the partition of Palestine (resolution 181 (II)).

For those in the Assembly who like me have witnessed countless meetings like this one over the past few decades, I want to stress that solving this problem requires a demonstration of political will on the part of many stakeholders but above all a clear understanding that peace is won in the hearts and minds of men, women and children, not at the point of a gun or a bomb. Let us pray that we will soon achieve peace in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/265 of 24 August 1994, I call on the observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Mr. De Rojas (Sovereign Order of Malta): I thank you, Madam President, for giving us the opportunity to take the floor to discuss these interconnected items today.

One of the draft resolutions to be considered addresses the issue of Jerusalem (A/73/L.29), which is central to the question of Palestine. As the Assembly is aware, Jerusalem is very dear to the Sovereign Order of Malta, as it is the place where the Order was founded, more than 900 years ago, and where our first hospital was built. The mission to care for the sick, the poor and the most vulnerable, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or religion, has remained the central purpose of the Order of Malta for more than nine centuries.

Like many others, we believe that Jerusalem belongs not to a single nation but rather to all of us, to humankind as a whole. It is a city sacred to the world's three great monotheistic religions and has been a place of pilgrimage and inspiration for countless millions for two millenniums. When the General Assembly first dealt with the question of Palestine in 1947, it very wisely decided to set up a special international regime for the city of Jerusalem within the partition framework, to be administered by the United Nations. The boundaries of what was called a *corpus separatum* were even laid out in a detailed map that was attached to resolution 181 (II), of 29 November 1947.

We are therefore glad to see that the draft resolution before us recalls that resolution 181 (II) reaffirms that the international community, through the United Nations, has a legitimate interest in the question of Jerusalem and the protection of the city's unique spiritual, religious and cultural dimensions. We are also encouraged by its reiterations that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the city of

Jerusalem should include internationally guaranteed provisions aimed at ensuring the freedom of religion and conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to its holy places for people of all religions and nationalities.

As the representative of the Holy See expressed when he addressed the General Assembly on this subject in December of last year (see A/ES-10/PV.37), we believe that only an internationally guaranteed status can preserve Jerusalem's unique character and ensure dialogue and reconciliation for peace in the region. We support that view, and we welcome this new and timely initiative by the General Assembly on the matter.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I would like to inform members that the consideration of draft resolutions A/73/L.31, A/73/L.32, A/73/L.33 and A/73/L.34 will take place following the conclusion of the debate on agenda item 38.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 39.

Agenda item 38

The situation in the Middle East

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/73/322 and A/73/346)

Draft resolutions (A/73/L.29 and A/73/L.30)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/73/L.29 and A/73/L.30.

Mr. Tayel (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The world today faces many humanitarian crises that are unfortunately concentrated in the Middle East, a region that has recently been plagued by increasing instability. We must bear in mind that one of the underlying causes of that instability is the decades of injustices done to the Arab people during the more than 50 years of their suffering under the yoke of occupation. There have been numerous attempts to exploit the crises in the region in order to conceal the occupation of Arab territories, which runs counter to basic humanitarian principles and perpetuates an illegal situation whose adverse effects continue to reverberate all over the region and the world. The many years of the occupation's existence have led to the acceptance by some of its practices against people who are supposed to enjoy

the same rights as all the other peoples of the world, especially the right to freedom, self-determination and the sense of belonging to a homeland. The international community is firmly committed to the rights of the Palestinian and Syrian people. In the Assembly today, I am therefore introducing on behalf of their sponsors two draft resolutions under agenda item 38, entitled “The situation in the Middle East”.

The first draft resolution, entitled “Jerusalem” (A/73/L.29), stresses the importance as a reference of the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that deal with the special status of occupied Jerusalem. The draft resolution emphasizes that all measures undertaken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its administrative and judicial authority on the city of Jerusalem are illegal, null and void. In the draft resolution the international community expresses its grave concern about the continuation of Israel’s illegal settlement activities, including the plan known as E1, as well as the construction of the separation wall in and around the city of East Jerusalem, further isolating the city from the rest of the Palestinian territories.

As we are committed to peace and to maintaining the religious significance of the city of Jerusalem, the draft resolution stresses the importance of taking into account the legitimate concerns of both Palestinians and Israelis by providing international guarantees that ensure religious freedom for the inhabitants of the city and free access to the holy sites for all, regardless of their religion or nationality. The draft resolution also calls for respect in both word and deed for the historical status of the holy sites in Jerusalem, including the Holy Mosque.

Today it is important to note the addition made to the draft resolution this year emphasizing the importance of Jerusalem to the three monotheistic religions. We reiterate what we have stressed many times before, which is that the issue of Jerusalem and the Palestinian question as a whole is primarily a political, legal and humanitarian issue, not a religious one. It can therefore be resolved only through adherence to international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which represent the sole references to the relations among States and peoples.

The second draft resolution, A/73/L.30, relates to the Syrian Golan. We are once again introducing this draft resolution in order to send an important message from the international community emphasizing that

the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Syria that the Syrians are enduring should not make the world forget that an important part of Syria is occupied, and that the Syrian people’s right to claim that occupied land will not disappear with time or fail for any other reasons that our brother people of Syria may face. The draft resolution stresses once again that 35 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 497 (1981), Israel has still not complied with its provisions. It makes reference to The Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 with regard to their applicability to the Syrian territories that have been occupied since 1967. It also points to the illegality of the imposition of Israeli laws on the Golan and of the Israeli settlements there. It calls on Israel to completely withdraw from the Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967 and to uphold what has already been achieved in that regard.

The people of the Middle East continue to suffer from the scourges of war and aggression and to aspire to achieving peace, stability and peaceful coexistence. For decades, United Nations resolutions have been in place that reflect those aspirations, which will come true only when we can demonstrate the political determination and serious commitment to ending the occupation of all the Palestinian and Arab territories, in line with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as well as the principle of land for peace and international law.

In conclusion, on behalf of all the sponsors of the two draft resolutions as well as myself, I call on all Member States to support the two draft resolutions. I urge everyone in the Hall to vote for them with a view to preventing the elimination of people’s legal rights while stressing the strong will of the international community and upholding the noble purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the Organization.

Mr. Mounzer (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt for introducing today’s draft resolutions A/73/L.30 and A/73/L.29, entitled “The Syrian Golan” and “Jerusalem”. I also thank all the sponsors of the draft resolution on the Syrian Golan and those who vote in favour of it.

The General Assembly has considered the agenda item on the situation in the Middle East every year since its twenty-fifth session in 1970. In every session, the Assembly has called on Israel to end its occupation of the Arab territories and affirmed that any measures

taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its legislation, jurisdiction and administrative authority on the city of Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan are illegal, illegitimate, null and void. The Assembly's resolutions are fully aligned with the unanimous position of the Security Council in its resolutions 478 (1980), on occupied Jerusalem, and 497 (1981), on the occupied Syrian Golan, both of which reject the unilateral and provocative decisions of the Israeli occupying authorities to annex occupied Palestinian Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan and consider those decisions devoid of any legal standing.

For more than seven decades, Israel has been occupying Palestinian territories, thereby causing the suffering of more than 5 million Palestinian refugees, who have been expelled from their homeland and whose land, homes and livelihoods have been seized by Israel, which has received support and protection from various States. That has enabled Israel to run rampant in the region, refusing to implement the hundreds of related resolutions adopted at the United Nations throughout those decades. Israel has continued its expansion across vast areas of Palestinian and Arab territories, perpetrating documented and systematic crimes, aggressions and violations of both international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all of which constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

My country reiterates its firm and principled stance in support of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination through the establishment of the independent State of Palestine on the entirety of their national land, with East Jerusalem as its capital. We support the right of refugees to return to their homeland, in accordance with resolution 194 (III) of 1948. Any measures that impede or undermine those rights are null and void and should be rejected, as they represent a threat to peace and security in the region and the world. That is especially true of the racist law recently adopted by Israel known as the nation-State law, as well as the decision of the United States Administration to move its Embassy to the city of Jerusalem and to stop funding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Israel continues to occupy a precious part of our land in the Syrian Golan. Our people there continue to suffer as a consequence of Israel's occupation and its oppressive and aggressive practices. From the very first day of its occupation, Israel has been attempting

to change the legal and political status of the occupied Syrian Golan by perpetrating systematic violations of human rights, first by attempting since 1981 to impose Israeli citizenship on our people there, and later through its absurd decision to hold farcical local elections in the occupied Syrian Golan on 30 October. All such efforts have been thoroughly thwarted by our unfaltering people in the area.

Israel continues to confiscate land in the occupied Syrian Golan, expanding its settlements there, looting its wealth, distorting its history, stealing its artefacts and planting landmines, while also continuing to deprive the steadfast Syrian citizens there of their right to remain in contact with their families in their motherland of Syria. Israel also deprives the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan of their right to study according to Syria's national education curricula. They have been deprived of the right to carry their Syrian national identity cards and build Syrian national hospitals in their occupied towns in the Golan. Furthermore, Israel continues to conduct its policies of terrorism, oppression, racial discrimination and arbitrary detention of Syrian citizens. It continues to make every aspect of their lives difficult, including their right, based on international laws and customs, to resist the occupation, and it continues to arrest them, try them in puppet courts, sentence them to long periods of imprisonment and treat them as war criminals. In that connection, we should remind the international community of Syria's Mandela, the prisoner Sedqi Suleiman Al-Maqet, whom the Israeli occupation authorities re-arrested in March 2015, after he had been imprisoned in Israeli jails for 27 years. It sentenced him to an additional 14 years of jail because he exposed through audio recordings and photographs the fact that Israel, the occupying Power, was cooperating with the terrorist organization Jabhat Al-Nusra and other terrorist organizations active throughout the disengagement zone in the Golan. We call on our global Organization not to delay in working to secure his release and that of the prisoner Amal Abu Saleh and the other prisoners arrested by Israel a few days ago, after the local elections farce.

My country reaffirms its sovereign right to the occupied Syrian Golan, based on the borders of 4 June 1967. That right is not open to negotiation or compromise or subject to a statute of limitations. Our occupied land and the rights we have been denied will be restored to us in full because we are the legitimate owners. Israel and its settlers must leave our land in the Golan sooner

or later. We stress that we will not forfeit our right to recover our occupied land and liberate those of our citizens who are suffering under Israeli occupation in the Syrian Golan, using any and every means, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions.

In its resolution 497 (1981), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it within two weeks on the implementation of the resolution, and decided that in the event of Israel's non-compliance, the Council would meet without delay, and no later than 5 January 1982, to consider taking appropriate measures in accordance with the Charter. Thirty-seven years later, and after the General Assembly's adoption of dozens of resolutions confirming Israel's non-compliance with resolution 497 (1981), we have the right to ask what the Council is waiting for to implement its resolution and force Israel to end its occupation of the Syrian Golan. What is the Council waiting for to put an end to Israel's violations and aggression against the territories of the Syrian Arab Republic, most recently on 29 November in the Al-Kiswa area south of Damascus? That represented overwhelming evidence that Israel has entered a new phase of State terrorism, as it is now competing with the terrorist organizations of Da'esh and Jabhat Al-Nusra to kill civilians.

It is no longer acceptable for the United Nations and its Member States to continue to address the oppressive Israeli occupation routinely or without showing solidarity that includes real steps that could lead to tangible results. The United Nations must therefore take immediate action to put an end to Israel's occupation and ensure its withdrawal from Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, to the 4 June 1967 lines, and to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981).

In conclusion, I call on all States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.30, entitled "The Syrian Golan", and all draft resolutions pertaining to Palestine.

Ms. Nuzuha (Maldives): The Middle East continues to capture the imagination of Maldivians, young and old alike, not because we are in the Middle East or even the immediate neighbourhood, but because we care about the suffering of so many innocent people who are being denied their right to life and basic human dignity, education, sanitation and health care. We support a settlement of the conflict in Palestine and call for an

end to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine, which remains at the root of the unending cycles of violence and conflict in the entire region.

The Maldives has always believed that the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side and in peace with Israel, is the only viable solution to the conflict in Palestine. That is the solution called for by the Security Council, particularly in its resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 2334 (2016). The Maldives therefore calls on Israel to fully implement the relevant Council resolutions, fully respect the legal obligations it undertook in the Oslo Accords and implement the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

Yet the question of Palestine remains unsettled and without meaningful progress. As recently as September, Israel's High Court rejected a petition to prevent the demolition of a village in the West Bank that would result in the displacement of hundreds of people, leaving them homeless and without a livelihood, a school for their children or access to basic health care. That epitomizes the failure of the international system to bring an end to the suffering of the people of the Middle East. Today, we once again join many countries in calling for a permanent end to the unlawful occupation of Palestinian lands and for granting the Palestinian people their legitimate right to self-determination.

The humanitarian situation continues to worsen in Syria, where the conflict is in its seventh year. The battle in Aleppo reduced the country to rubble. The entire world now fears the outbreak of another conflict in Syria's north-western Idlib province, which could result in the worst humanitarian catastrophe of this century. Should it happen, more than 3 million people would be displaced with nowhere to seek shelter, food or access to health care. We therefore call on the international community to take more assertive steps to halt the tide of suffering in Syria. Humanitarian intervention is an absolute necessity, but a permanent political solution must be found.

The already dire situation in the Middle East is being exacerbated by terrorist groups such as Da'esh, which are inflicting destruction and imposing extreme social conditions through barbaric acts of violence and bloodshed. They do not recognize borders or distinguish between young and old, women and

men, nor do they respect any religion or culture. The Maldives condemns any attempt to attribute terrorism to any specific religion, culture or tradition. We are also of the view that the factors of terrorism should be tackled through international cooperation focused on combating violent extremism.

It is important that we rise above the shackles of the past to move towards a promising future. This is a compromise that must be made by the people and leaders of the countries of the region in order to save an area that has served as the cradle of human civilization and the birthplace of many early scientific and technological advances. The Maldives therefore stands ready, full of hope, to work to find a lasting solution to this conflict, for we believe that there is always room for hope in any hardship.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting. I would like to address agenda items 38, “The situation in the Middle East”, and 39, “Question of Palestine”, and with regard to the latter item, to take special note of the fact that yesterday was the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The situation in the Middle East remains volatile and complex. Its interlocking challenges require the sustained attention of the international community. In Yemen, we need to make progress urgently, as more than 14 million people run the risk of famine. In Syria, we have yet to see substantial and irreversible progress on either the political or the humanitarian front. Through it all, the Middle East peace process is one of the central issues shaping international relations in the region. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict feeds into wider regional dynamics, and the lack of concrete progress is an obstacle to improving the relations between regional players. There is a diplomatic and security cost to leaving that issue unresolved, and it is borne by all. The only way to achieve a solution to that conflict is through direct negotiations between both the parties. It is clear that a resumption of peace talks is needed, but the current outlook remains bleak. The international community, including the General Assembly, must continue to play its role in helping to create an environment conducive to peace. While there are many essential steps that will have to be taken, I want to highlight three actions that the international community can take now.

First, building confidence among the parties requires enhanced international support. We appreciate the various efforts made so far by Member States and regional actors. For its part, Japan is committed to continuing its unique confidence-building measures through the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity initiative, which encourages and supports interdependence in the region, and the independence of the Palestinian economy, through regional cooperation with Palestine, Jordan and Israel.

Secondly, the international community must maintain its strong support for a two-State solution. That means not only by expressing political support but also by rejecting any activity that makes the possibility of achieving that solution less likely. The continuing Israeli settlement activities are in violation of international law and must cease immediately. Violence also remains a major obstacle to peace. Japan condemns all acts of violence, which are fundamentally incompatible with the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In supporting a two-State solution, the international community also has a role to play in upholding the internationally agreed parameters, including on the status of Jerusalem.

Finally, we must immediately alleviate the economic and humanitarian situation, which is particularly dire in Gaza. While we should swiftly implement the package agreed on in the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians, the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza is crucial.

In terms of broader stabilization and security in the Middle East and North Africa, let me briefly touch on the Kono four principles, which Japan’s Foreign Minister Kono announced last year. The principles emphasize, first, intellectual and human contributions; secondly, investment in people; thirdly, enduring efforts; and fourthly, enhanced political efforts. Japan has been conducting several programmes with tangible outcomes, such as the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park in Palestine, which is in its tenth year of operation, and our capacity-building initiative for teachers and instructors in the Middle East. We are committed to continuing those efforts.

Japan believes in what we can achieve through multilateral efforts at the United Nations. The international community, including the Assembly, must work in a way that creates a positive atmosphere for

peace rather than feeding divisions. Japan will continue to engage constructively to that end.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia and the countries of the Middle East are linked by many decades of friendship and constructive, mutually beneficial cooperation. Our relations have withstood the test of time. We are genuinely interested in restoring stability in the region as soon as possible. However, the reality today is such that the situation in the Middle East remains difficult and still demands significant collective efforts. Only through broad-based cooperation and multilateral diplomacy can we make progress in resolving the acute crises in the region and defeating terrorism.

We firmly believe that developing a shared vision of ways to make progress towards stabilization and normalization in the Middle East is possible despite the differences in our approaches. The joint actions of the guarantor countries of the Astana process have proved that, and we are open to everyone who wants to be involved in such efforts. Working together, we can do a great deal to improve the situation in the Middle East. United in the broadest possible front, something that Russia's President Vladimir Putin has called for, we can make real breakthroughs in combating terrorism. Together, we can end the bloodshed in Yemen, stabilize Libya, help Syrian refugees return home, tackle the challenge of global migration, support normalization in Iraq and resolve other crises. The countries of the region possess a wealth of the cultural, human and natural potential that can enable them to develop sustainably and even flourish. But that potential will be fully realized only when interference in the domestic affairs of States in the Middle East ends. Like other provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the principle of non-intervention must be respected. We see a firm foundation in that strict respect for our collective quest to resolve crises, first and foremost through the United Nations and its Security Council, which are the fundamental guarantors of today's international legal system.

We will not accept aggressive revisionism aimed at various international agreements originally arrived at based on the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, among other things. Such dangerous attempts not only negate earlier efforts to resolve conflicts, they also undermine our Organization's authority and generally erode international law. We should focus all our efforts not

on unilateral revisionist policies but on intensifying mediation, with the United Nations taking a leading role in order to launch or rekindle dialogue mechanisms for settling the crises at the centre of which lies the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, whose resolution is key to improving the situation throughout the region.

Unfortunately, destabilizing trends are still dominant in the occupied Palestinian territories, and the prospects for a resumption of the negotiation process are becoming increasingly remote. The gulf of misunderstanding and mistrust between Palestinians and Israelis is widening. Instead of calls for peace and peaceful initiatives, what is now in the forefront is violence, unilateral measures, inflammatory rhetoric and attempts to create new facts on the ground, damaging the possibility of a settlement. The tension continues around the Gaza Strip, where just recently, thanks to monumental efforts, a relative calm has been achieved. We hope that it can be sustained and long-term, and that it will give the international community a chance to revitalize efforts to address the appalling humanitarian situation and focus on advancing the political process. Of course, any assistance to Gaza should be conducted in close coordination with the legitimate Palestinian authorities under President Abbas, and should align with efforts to resolve the problem of restoring Palestinian unity.

Russia's position has remained consistent. A comprehensive, sustainable Arab-Israeli settlement and resolution of the Palestinian question can be achieved on an internationally recognized basis that includes the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace in relation to all the occupied territories, among them the Syrian Golan. A crucial instrument in the settlement is still the concept of a two-State solution, which assumes the establishment in the region, as a result of negotiations, of a State of Palestine coexisting in peace and security alongside Israel. Any policy aimed at creating new facts on the ground is unacceptable, and we consider the expansion of Israeli settlements, the demolition of Palestinian property and the expulsion of Palestinian families unlawful. We condemn all forms of violence and inflammatory rhetoric. We believe that only a direct dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis can make it possible to find answers to all the final-status issues. That applies to Jerusalem, refugees, borders and core regional security issues. We cannot simply pick up those sensitive

problems and take them off the negotiating table before the parties have discussed them.

Russia will continue to play an active role in the Middle East in its capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the Middle East Quartet of international mediators, which remains the only mediation format approved by Security Council resolutions. The proposal for convening a summit in Russia between the leaders of Palestine and Israel remains on the table. We will continue to assist the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) financially and politically. UNRWA's operations are of key significance, as they have an important stabilizing effect in the Palestinian territories and the countries of the Middle East. The Agency must endure and be fully functional.

The Russian Federation supports the development of a positive, unifying agenda for the entire international community on the Middle East, including Palestine. What will be crucial to our combined efforts in the region is establishing conditions that are conducive to strengthening a general atmosphere of trust. That has key significance for the relations between the Arab States, Israel and Iran. We want to remind the Assembly that in resolution 598 (1987), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to work with States in the region to come up with measures to enhance the security and stability of the region. That is not easy, but we have to start work on it. Russia is willing to make every effort to assist all our regional partners, without exception. Our ultimate goal must be to create a genuinely inclusive regional security architecture that can encompass every State in that part of the world. Our concept for strengthening security in the Persian Gulf through international guarantees is still relevant and its implementation could begin with the holding of a conference with the participation of the States in the subregion. Over the long term, it could be expanded to include other Middle Eastern States.

We want to emphasize that all the decisions taken by the General Assembly on this issue have to follow the logic of resolving these problems. Russia stands ready to work with all interested parties on an open and impartial basis on all these and other aspects.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I would like to inform members that we will take action on draft resolutions A/73/L.29 and A/73/L.30

after doing so on draft resolutions A/73/L.31, A/73/L.32, A/73/L.33 and A/73/L.34, submitted under agenda item 39.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 38.

Agenda item 39 (*continued*)

Question of Palestine

Draft resolutions (A/73/L.31, A/73/L.32, A/73/L.33 and A/73/L.34)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before the Assembly takes action on the draft resolutions one by one, members are reminded that they will have an opportunity to explain their vote on all four draft resolutions either before or after action is taken on all of them.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/73/L.31, A/73/L.32, A/73/L.33 and A/73/L.34.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote should be limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The EU would like to thank the Palestinian delegation for the successful outcome of our negotiations on a number of the draft resolutions on which the General Assembly is now taking action. As an outcome of those negotiations, the EU confirms its position on the package.

At this time, we would like to put it on record that with regard to all draft resolutions adopted during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, the EU and its member States consider that whenever the Palestinian Government is mentioned, it refers to the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, the use of the term "Palestine" in any of those draft resolutions cannot be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of our member States on that issue and hence on the question of the validity of an accession to the conventions and treaties it mentions. We also point out that the European Union as a whole has not expressed a legal qualification with regard to the term "forced displacement", used in

a number of draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 39.

Some of the draft resolutions to be adopted today refer to the holy sites in Jerusalem. The EU is concerned about the worrying developments and recurrent violent clashes at the Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The EU recalls the special significance of the holy sites and calls for upholding the status quo put in place in 1967 for the Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, in line with previous understandings and with respect to Jordan's special role. The EU recalls that its position with regard to those draft resolutions does not imply a change in its stance on the terminology concerning the Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The EU stresses the need for language on the holy sites of Jerusalem to reflect the importance and historical significance of the holy sites for the three monotheistic religions and to respect religious and cultural sensitivities. The future choice of language may affect the EU's collective support for the draft resolutions according to the established voting pattern.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): This explanation of vote refers to all the draft resolutions under agenda items 38 and 39. On 29 November 1947, the United Nations adopted resolution 181 (II), which called for the creation of independent Arab and Jewish States living side by side. The State of Israel accepted that resolution, and the Arab world rejected it. On 15 May 1948, only one day after Israel declared its independence, a coalition of Arab armies invaded Israel. Their goal was simple — to destroy the newly established Jewish State.

Yesterday, 29 November, was the seventy-first anniversary of that crucial United Nations vote (see A/PV.128). It should have been a day of celebration, but year after year, that historic date becomes an annual Israel-bashing session. Some countries still refuse to accept the existence of the State of Israel in the Middle East. We heard some of them speak yesterday (see A/73/PV.42) and earlier today.

We are living at a time when many crises are raging across the Middle East and around the world. It is a shame that rather than addressing those crises, the United Nations adopts so many biased resolutions and devotes precious resources to politicized bodies whose sole purpose is to attack and denounce Israel.

One of those bodies is the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People — a Committee that does nothing but spread a

one-sided political narrative against one United Nations Member State and uses the money of all Member States to do so. Earlier this week, the Committee invited a guest speaker who suggested that solidarity from the international community requires embracing the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel. He concluded his statement with a call for a free Palestine from the river to the sea. For those who are not familiar with the map of the region, there is only one meaning to what he suggested — a Palestinian State, not side by side with Israel but instead of Israel.

The Division for Palestinian Rights supports that Committee. Last year, the Division invited several organizations and speakers with clear and public ties to terrorism to participate in the Committee's events. Let me repeat that. A body of the Secretariat funded by all Member States provided a platform for public supporters and glorifiers of terrorism. That is not just a bad use of our time but is completely against our values. It is truly disturbing and shameful.

That is not all. The Division for Palestinian Rights is the only office of the Secretariat promoting an agenda that directly targets one Member State, and it fills 15 paid positions to do so. Moreover, a large portion of the funding for the Division covers business-class airline tickets so that participants in its anti-Israel events can travel anywhere in the world to attend. That type of Division and funding at the United Nations is truly unparalleled, especially as the Department of Political Affairs struggles to tackle its endless responsibilities with limited human and financial resources.

I turn now to the special information programme on the question of Palestine, led by the Department of Public Information (DPI), which organizes an annual seminar on peace in the Middle East. No one should be misled by the title — the seminar has nothing to do with peace. It has everything to do with anti-Israel sentiment and does little to promote dialogue and understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. This year's seminar had a panel entitled "Seventy years after Nakba day". The term "Nakba" means catastrophe. By adopting that term at the seminar, the special information programme of the DPI is endorsing the Palestinians' denial of Israel's legitimacy. Let me be clear — calling the establishment of Israel a catastrophe is not a statement of solidarity with the Palestinians; it is a denial of Israel's right to exist.

There is no way to justify the fact that the United Nations spends almost \$6.5 million of its budget on organizations and bodies that do nothing but try to isolate Israel. Not only are they one-sided, but they are dangerous and give the floor to those who work against a peaceful solution.

The problem does not end with the allocation of United Nations funding. It continues with the draft resolutions on which we will vote today. Two of them discuss the Temple Mount, a sacred place for all three monotheistic religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Yet those draft resolutions have omitted any reference to the Jewish or Christian connection to the Temple Mount, or, as we call it in Hebrew, Har Habayit. That omission is deliberate. It shows yet another instance of the Palestinians' refusal to recognize the proven historical connection between Judaism, Christianity, the Temple Mount and Jerusalem as a whole. The international community must stop participating in such a blatant denial of history. It must not permit such blatant attempts to delegitimize Israel.

As for the draft resolution regarding the Golan (A/73/L.30), the situation in Syria is dire. For the past seven years, the Syrian regime has been systematically killing its own people and has even used chemical weapons against them. Meanwhile, Israel has been taking care of thousands of injured Syrians in its hospitals. Yet, despite the realities on the ground, absurdity prevails in the General Assembly.

Supporting the six anti-Israel draft resolutions presented today will neither advance nor inspire peace. It will only inspire hate. Israel will vote against them and I call on everyone to do the same.

Mr. Ordeman (United States of America): This explanation of vote addresses all draft resolutions under agenda items 38 and 39.

The United States continues to oppose the annual submission of a disproportionate number of unfair draft resolutions biased against Israel. As in the past, this one-sided approach damages the prospects for peace by undermining trust between the parties and failing to create the kind of positive international environment that is critical to achieving peace.

We are disappointed that, despite messages of support for reform, Member States continue to single out Israel with such draft resolutions. As the United States has repeatedly made clear, that dynamic is

unacceptable. Again, we see draft resolutions that are quick to condemn all manner of Israeli actions but say almost nothing about Palestinian terrorist attacks against innocent civilians. That is particularly acute now, when the rocket attacks of 12 November saw more projectiles fired on a single day than on any day since 2014. That is also why, for the first time, we are introducing a stand-alone draft resolution to condemn Hamas and other militant groups for their indiscriminate attacks on civilians and their primary role in the worsening humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza, as well as their actions to restrict free expression and silence political dissent.

Regarding the draft resolutions subject to a vote on 29 and 30 November, the United States will once again vote against those one-sided draft resolutions and encourages other nations to do so as well. Those draft resolutions damage the credibility of the United Nations, as they show a clear bias in favour of one party and raise real questions regarding the impartiality of the United Nations. That, in turn, serves to discredit the Organization's important role in supporting the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East.

In particular, the United States has significant concerns with draft resolutions A/73/L.31 and A/73/L.34, "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" and "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", respectively. Those two draft resolutions have actual budgetary implications and consume limited United Nations resources that would be better deployed elsewhere. Last year, the operations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people and the Division for Palestinian Rights cost nearly \$3 million. Those two draft resolutions propagate assumptions regarding issues that the parties have agreed should be resolved in the context of final status negotiations and do nothing to bring us closer to the goal we all share of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Instead, they undermine our efforts by renewing the mandates of entities that perpetuate a clear and demonstrated bias that serves only to drive the parties further apart.

The Palestinians are the only actor in the United Nations system with a dedicated Division within the Secretariat. The message that sends is that the Palestinians never really need to come back to the negotiating table. They can rely on flawed and biased mechanisms such as these to push their agenda. The United States remains firmly and consistently

committed to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Any resolution adopted here today will only distract from that process. One-sided resolutions do not help to advance peace. The cause of peace will be served when the bias of the United Nations against Israel ends. The United States has consistently opposed every effort to delegitimize Israel or undermine its security at the United Nations, and we will continue to do so with vigour. We hope that other Members will join us by voting against these draft resolutions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions A/73/L.31, A/73/L.32, A/73/L.33 and A/73/L.34.

We first turn to draft resolution A/73/L.31, entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/73/L.31: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Ecuador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Viet Nam.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon,

Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Republic of Moldova, Solomon Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

The draft resolution was adopted by 100 votes to 12, with 62 abstentions (resolution 73/18).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.32, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/73/L.32: Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Ecuador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Viet Nam.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda,

Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu

The draft resolution was adopted by 156 votes to 8, with 12 abstentions (resolution 73/19).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn next to draft resolution A/73/L.33, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/73/L.33: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Ecuador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Guatemala, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Central African Republic, Fiji, Honduras, Mexico, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu

The draft resolution was adopted by 152 votes to 8, with 14 abstentions (resolution 73/20).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.34 entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/73/L.34, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Ecuador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Viet Nam.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Israel, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Republic of Moldova, Solomon Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/73/L.34 was adopted by 96 votes to 13, with 64 abstentions (resolution 73/21).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor for explanations of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Tang (Singapore): I am speaking in explanation of vote after the adoption of resolutions 73/18, 73/19, 73/20 and 73/21.

Singapore voted in favour of resolution 73/18, entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, based on the understanding that the reference in paragraph 2 to the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders should be interpreted in the same manner as set out in paragraph 1 of resolution 73/19, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, namely, “the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders”.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 39.

Agenda item 38 (continued)**The situation in the Middle East****Draft resolutions (A/73/L.29 and A/73/L.30)**

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to take action on draft resolutions A/73/L.29 and A/73/L.30.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.29, entitled “Jerusalem”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.29: Algeria, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Cuba, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Viet Nam.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan,

Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Guatemala, Israel, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Central African Republic, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Honduras, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Samoa, South Sudan, Togo, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/73/L.29 was adopted by 148 votes to 11, with 14 abstentions (resolution 73/22).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.30, entitled “The Syrian Golan”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/73/L.30, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Malaysia, Qatar, Senegal and the Sudan.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tuvalu, Ukraine, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/73/L.30 was adopted 99 votes to 10, with 66 abstentions (resolution 73/23).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor for explanations of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the delegations of Brazil and Argentina to explain our votes.

As we have done in previous years, with respect to resolution 73/23, concerning the Syrian Golan, which the General Assembly has just adopted, Brazil and Argentina voted in favour of the resolution because we believe that its vital nature is linked to the illegality of the acquisition of territories by force. Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any State.

I would also like to clarify the position of our delegations with respect to paragraph 6 of the resolution. Our vote is without prejudice to the content of that paragraph, particularly the reference to 4 June 1967. Brazil and Argentina believe that it is important to make progress in the search for a solution to the Syrian-Israeli aspect of the conflict in the Middle East with the aim of putting an end to the occupation of the Golan Heights. Hence, on behalf of the Governments of Brazil and Argentina, I again highlight the importance of resuming negotiations to find a definitive solution to the situation in the Syrian Golan, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): On behalf of the delegation of the State of Palestine, allow me to express our gratitude and thanks to all the countries that voted in favour of the five resolutions related to the question of Palestine and also in favour of resolution 73/23, concerning the Syrian Golan. We see that massive support, which is similar to last year's pattern of voting, as a sign of the strong support of the international community for the global consensus on how to solve

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of Palestine. We sincerely thank the Assembly for its steadfastness, resolve and determination in ensuring that the global consensus for which we have all worked, for a long period of time, is still the cornerstone to finding a just and lasting peace to this conflict. That will give us the strength to remain steadfast in our homeland and to seek a peaceful, just solution to this conflict on the basis of international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions on the subject. We thank the Member States for that.

To those who are advocating a stand-alone resolution, which to my understanding will be dealt with next Thursday afternoon, let me just ask — after the 16 resolutions that have been adopted in the committees and in the General Assembly, why submit this draft resolution? Are their intentions truly to open doors for peace, or are their intentions disruptive and irresponsible and an attempt to distract us from pushing forward to find a solution to this conflict on the basis of what we have agreed to over the years, namely, the global consensus on the basis of a two-State solution based on the borders of 1967, with East Jerusalem as the capital of our State? That would require, of course, putting an end to the Israeli occupation that has lasted for almost 51 years.

We believe that those who are advocating this initiative are not acting out of a genuine wish to open doors for peace. After all, they are the ones who unleashed a massive barrage of attacks against us, starting with violating Security Council resolutions, recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel, moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and the most recent attacks against us for nothing that was done from our side. We simply come to the General Assembly to seek a legal, political, diplomatic solution to the conflict; yet they punish us for doing so. The latest episode of such punishment is the free, stand-alone draft resolution.

Of course, we refuted the argument of those who are advancing this draft resolution, and we have circulated our argument refuting their argument to the entire Assembly. There is therefore no need for me to dwell on that. However, I appeal to the Assembly to read our memorandum and the annex thereto with regard to this free, stand-alone draft resolution. Therefore, I appeal to all members, when that draft resolution is put to a vote next Thursday, to vote against it and to defend the global consensus to which we have agreed, as reflected in the

package of resolutions, especially the 13 political ones whose language we negotiated with all members. We are grateful that States voted in favour of the package.

The stand-alone draft resolution is trying to tell all of us that the global consensus on how to resolve this issue is no more and is not acceptable, and that what is acceptable is only the draft resolution that they are pushing, which names and shames and shows no seriousness or genuineness about opening doors for peace. I therefore appeal to members and ask that when that draft resolution is put to a vote, they vote against it because voting against it means that the Assembly still upholds the global consensus on how to resolve this situation. I hope that next Thursday, my delegation will be able to thank the Assembly in the same way as I am thanking it now for upholding the global consensus on resolving the question of Palestine.

I want to thank you, Madam President, and your Office for working with us to have an equal, reasonable amount of time for all parties to be able to deal with what we must deal with next Thursday afternoon.

Mr. Mounzer (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to express its sincere

appreciation and gratitude to the General Assembly for having once again, and without interruption since 1981, adopted the resolution entitled “The Syrian Golan” (resolution 73/23), as well as for having adopted the other resolutions submitted under the two agenda items concerning the Palestinian question and the situation in the Middle East.

I reiterate my country’s gratitude to all the States that sponsored and voted in favour of the resolution regarding the Syrian Golan. The majority of States Members of the United Nations continues to support those resolutions, which reflects their tenacious adherence to the objectives and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, their rejection of foreign occupation and their support for our right to regain every inch of our territories that have been occupied by Israel since 1967.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 38.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.