



Report on the visit of a Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to Brussels

4 to 6 March 2019

1. Pursuant to the 2019 Committee Programme of Work and because Belgium (with other European Union [EU] Member States) is a Security Council member in 2019/20, a Committee delegation visited Brussels to meet with Belgian and EU officials, parliamentarians and solidarity movement groups. The purpose was to mobilize regional and national support for the two-State solution - including concrete steps such as recognition of the State of Palestine and protection of Palestinian civilians – as well as engaging civil society organisations across Europe to explore new ideas in promoting the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The visit took place in the context of a stalled peace process, threats to multilateralism and unilateral action on final status issues, including Jerusalem, and funding for UNRWA.
2. The Delegation, one of the largest representing the Committee, consisted of the Chair Ambassador Cheikh Niang (Senegal); Vice-Chairs Ambassadors Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba), Mohammad Koba (Indonesia) and Neville Gertze (Namibia); Chargé d'affaires Nazifullah Salarzai (Afghanistan); the Rapporteur Ambassador Carmelo Inguanez (Malta); and the Observer Ambassador Riyad Mansour (Palestine).
3. The delegation, and notably the Palestinian Permanent Observer Ambassador Mansour, appealed to the EU to be proactive within the existing parameters on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – without waiting for the United States' peace plan – including through playing a more active role within the Middle East Quartet. In addition, among other issues the delegation sought EU support to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law; and to ensure the implementation by its Member States of the EU policy of differentiation regarding products imported from Israel's illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and as a requirement of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). Most importantly, the delegation called for bold steps such as the recognition of the State of Palestine, in a collective approach by EU Member States, as a means to promote the peace process. The delegation also commended Belgium and the EU for their additional contribution to UNRWA in 2018 and advocated for maintaining this support in 2019.
4. It transpired from the meetings held during the three-day visit that a more sustained engagement with the EU as a whole, as well as individual EU Member States, would be needed to ensure that existing concrete steps taken by few EU Member States (Sweden, Ireland) would not lose momentum and that the question of Palestine would remain in the European agenda as the central issue in the Middle East Peace Process. In this context, an annual visit of the Delegation to the EU should be considered.