



# General Assembly

Official Records

## Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**398**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 27 November 2019, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Chair:* Mr. Niang ..... (Senegal)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): Today we gather for a special meeting to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977.

I have the honour and the pleasure to welcome His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the General Assembly; Her Excellency Ms. Karen Pierce, President of the Security Council; Her Excellency Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet; His Excellency Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations and representative of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at this meeting; Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations; and Her Excellency Mrs. Kshenuka Dhireni Senewiratne, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, who will be making a statement during the second part of this meeting.

I wish also to welcome the representatives of Member States and intergovernmental and civil-society

organizations and all who accepted the Committee's invitation to attend today's special meeting. We thank everyone, especially Mr. Eugene Gus Newport, a United States social justice activist who accepted the invitation of the Committee to deliver a message as a voice among millions within civil society. Mr. Newport will make a statement during the second part of the meeting.

I will now make a statement in my capacity as Chair of the Committee.

We gather once again today to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and to reaffirm the absolute need to fully implement resolution 181 (II), adopted 72 years ago, on 29 November 1947, when the General Assembly decided to partition Mandate Palestine into two neighbouring sovereign States. However, despite that resolution, only one State came to be, while the other has still not achieved full independence and sovereignty. It is discouraging that we still have to meet every year to remind the entire world that the United Nations is still struggling to make their promise a reality.

The Palestinian people have been living under illegal occupation for 52 years, which infringes upon their inalienable right to self-determination, statehood and independence, and millions of Palestinians have been suffering from deprivation and exile as their right to return as Palestinian refugees is denied time and again.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the expansion of Israeli settlements continues unabated, in violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). The occupying Power must cease all illegal settlement activities in accordance with its legal obligations under international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant resolutions.

The States Members of the United Nations are also required to comply with paragraph 5 of resolution 2334 (2016), which obligates them to make a trade distinction between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, as was recently reaffirmed by the European Court of Justice. In that connection, as States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, they must redouble efforts to ensure full respect for the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

Israeli political leaders recently openly declared their intention to annex the occupied Palestinian territories. Meanwhile, entire Palestinian families are seeing their homes demolished and their lives paralysed by restrictions on the freedom of movement on their own land, imposed through the excessive use of force, even deadly force, sometimes against children. The international community must firmly oppose that practice, which is contrary to international law and runs counter to the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Similarly, for 12 years Gaza has been subjected to an illegal blockade, resulting in catastrophic humanitarian conditions that are overwhelming its inhabitants and suffocating its economic growth — leading hundreds of young Palestinians to protest against the denial of their fundamental rights and producing growing despair at the barrier with Israel, where many are killed, as the occupying forces continue to fire live ammunition at unarmed civilian protesters. Palestinians in Gaza live in the midst of destroyed buildings.

Those are all reminders of the too many conflicts they have endured, such as the events of only a few weeks ago. This senseless cycle of violence must stop. We call on all parties to put an end to all forms of incitement, provocation and violence against civilians, including women and children, and to exercise the utmost restraint. It is important that the recent ceasefire between Israel and Islamic Jihad be respected in order to protect the lives of civilians. In that regard, we

welcome the efforts by Egypt and the United Nations to restore calm and promote Palestinian reconciliation.

On this Day of Solidarity, we stand with the Palestinian refugees who wish to return home one day. It is their right, a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 194 (III) and dozens of other subsequent resolutions.

I would like to express the Committee's satisfaction with the vote held last year on 15 November, by an overwhelming majority, in favour of renewing the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It should be seen as a new and resounding sign of support for the Agency's vital work, as well as a show of solidarity with the Palestine refugees. The vote recognized the importance of UNRWA's essential services to 5.3 million Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory, thereby contributing to their development and protection and to stability in the region. It is also a clear message in favour of multilateralism.

Moreover, a fair resolution of the status of Jerusalem, as a final-status issue, must ensure respect for Jerusalem as a place where the three monotheistic religions coexist and ensure the protection of the historical status quo at the holy sites.

The Palestinian people do not expect only sympathy for their plight and solidarity for their just cause. They must also be able to count on firm support and credible political prospects in order to achieve an independent State. They need real partners who are ready to actually implement what the General Assembly and the Security Council have repeatedly called for since the adoption of resolution 181 (II), and who are also ready to support the attainment of their inalienable rights.

We must not forget that, despite the conflict, the deep mistrust between the parties, the unhelpful unilateral measures and non-compliance with the relevant resolutions of United Nations organs and international law, our objective remains the same — a just and lasting solution of two States living side by side in peace and security, within the pre-1967 borders, and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

Respect for human rights and human dignity and our quest for justice to enable the Palestinian people

to enjoy those same rights derive from our unwavering faith in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Many voices have clamoured and many countries have denounced this historical injustice over the years, demonstrating the depth of solidarity and the universal scope of this cause. It is precisely as an expression of this collective responsibility that our Committee was created more than 40 years ago by the General Assembly. We will continue to fulfil the Committee's mandate and never allow the Palestinian question to be forgotten until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence are fully realized, based on the solution of two neighbouring States living side by side in peace and security. Despite all the headwinds, that day will come, and we will then celebrate the achievement of a just peace in the interest of the Palestinians and all the peoples of the region.

I now have the honour to give the floor to the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.

**Mr. Muhammad-Bande** (President of the General Assembly): I thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for organizing this event to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This International Day, which is observed by the United Nations each year, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977, resolution 34/65 D, of 12 December 1979, and other resolutions adopted under the agenda item "The question of Palestine", reminds us that we have the collective task of resolving the lingering Palestinian issue.

This is important given that for over seven decades, the question of Palestine has remained unresolved. It is civilians who suffer most from the violence, killings, incitements, demolitions, illegal settlement activities and so on. This meeting is being held amid the deteriorating political and security situation that continues to destabilize the Middle East. This is no doubt fuelled by ignoring the fact that, whether we are Arab or Jewish, we are one and our destinies are inextricably linked. In true solidarity with the Palestinians, we must all pull together to implement the various resolutions on the Palestinian question. Whatever the leanings of the delegations involved, we must work on this matter with a heightened sense of justice and faith.

The community of nations must show good faith in mediating a mutually agreeable outcome for both parties. The occupying Power should discharge its obligations in accordance with the relevant laws. Accordingly, we must focus on how to best de-escalate and ensure a comprehensive and just peace. That is only possible if actors, particularly leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, work in concert for the establishment of the two-State solution, in accordance with resolution 181 (II) — two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders, based on the 1967 lines.

In our quest for peace we must begin from the premise that a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot come from unilateral decisions that are contrary to long-agreed positions on the matter. It must also be clear that all forms of violence from whatever source must cease, as any loss of human life, be it Palestinian or Israeli, is unacceptable. All legitimate grievances must be solved amicably, with leaders working to prevent violent actions.

There is no doubt that the Palestinian people are living in extremely complex humanitarian conditions, as refugees make up 43 per cent of the population. Most citizens of Palestine have grown up in that untenable situation. The population in Gaza continues to endure extremely difficult living conditions and human rights violations. That must stop, as children and women are among the many casualties of those actions. Their need for food, water, energy, health care, education and dignity, and the creation of decent jobs is exacerbated by the need to repair and rebuild as a result of the current clashes, as well as insufficient resources and the decline in financial aid.

We must act to ensure that the critical humanitarian and socioeconomic situation does not continue to fuel anger and despair among the people, thereby provoking further escalation of violence. This situation must be tackled by strengthening the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to ensure that it can meet the humanitarian needs of more than 5.4 million Palestinian refugees. It is important that we collectively safeguard the Agency against the political and financial challenges it faces.

Today, as we reaffirm our support for the Palestinian people, it is important not to lose faith that we could make significant progress, even making the extension of the UNRWA mandate unnecessary. I encourage

all parties to re-engage in dialogue on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative, among other things. We stand in solidarity with the Palestinians and with all peoples who are treated unjustly.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank President Muhammad-Bande for his important statement. The Committee thanks him for the General Assembly's treatment, under his leadership, of the prevailing situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the entire Middle East.

I now have the honour to give the floor to the President of the Security Council, Ms. Karen Pierce.

**Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom), President of the Security Council: I would like to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me to address this meeting in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November.

During the past year, the Security Council has remained seized of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Council has continued to receive monthly briefings from the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and to hold open debates on this agenda item on a quarterly basis. The Council has also continued to receive the Secretary-General's reports and briefings by the Special Coordinator every three months, as well as in written form in March of this year (see S/PV.8489). The Security Council convened additional meetings in February in response to the situation in Hebron (see S/PV.8466) and in March on the issue of revenue transfers from Israel to the Palestinian Authority.

The situation in the Middle East remains a central concern of the Security Council, not least given the lack of progress in finding a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Security Council remains fully committed to pursuing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in accordance with international law and bearing in mind its relevant resolutions. That should be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties. Council members continue to be concerned about the situation on the ground and call for an immediate end to actions that undermine trust between the parties. Members of the

Security Council condemn violence and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, both Israeli and Palestinian.

The Security Council continues to be concerned about the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza, and calls on all relevant actors to take steps to sustainably improve it. Council members welcome the efforts of Egypt and the United Nations in that regard, and encourage progress towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation and the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza. The Security Council will continue to follow closely the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and to pursue its efforts towards an environment conducive to achieving the peace and security that the Israeli and Palestinian people both need and deserve.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank Her Excellency Ms. Karen Pierce, President of the Security Council, for her important statement, which renews the unwavering commitment of the Security Council to a comprehensive, fair and sustainable peace in the Middle East based on a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

I have the honour to give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

**Ms. Ribeiro Viotti**: I bring warm greetings from the Secretary-General, who has asked me to share with all present his message for this year's worldwide observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

"Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains one of the most intractable challenges facing the international community. Regrettably, over the past year there have been no positive developments, and the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. The intensification of illegal settlements, demolitions of Palestinian homes and the pervasive suffering in Gaza must stop. The establishment of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, as stated in Security Council resolution 2334 (2016).

"These actions threaten to undermine the viability of establishing a Palestinian State based on the relevant United Nations resolutions. At the same time, the indiscriminate launching of rockets



and mortars towards Israeli civilian populations must cease. I call on Israelis and Palestinians and all their supporters to take steps that will restore faith in the two-State solution. There is no viable alternative.

“It is a dangerous illusion to think that the conflict can be managed or contained in perpetuity. Only constructive negotiations between the parties in good faith, with the support of the international community, and adhering to long-standing resolutions and long-agreed parameters will bring about a just and durable solution, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. What is needed first and foremost are leadership and political will. The efforts of civil society and those on all sides who seek to bridge the gap between Israelis and Palestinians also need to be supported.

“On this International Day of Solidarity, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding the rights of the Palestinian people. The United Nations will not waver in its commitment to the Palestinian people as we strive to achieve their inalienable rights and build a future of peace, justice, security and dignity for Palestinians and Israelis alike.”

Let me now add a few words of my own.

The General Assembly resolution partitioning Palestine into two States was adopted 70 years ago. This past September marked 26 years since the signing of the Oslo Accords, which were intended to lead to the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines. Sadly, as we all know, that has not happened. The two-State solution, the only viable resolution to this conflict, remains as distant as ever.

While we work for a resumption of negotiations, we must address the immense suffering of civilians in Gaza, where some 2 million Palestinians live in poverty and unemployment, with restricted access to health care, education and basic services, and impacted daily by Israeli-imposed closures.

We must maintain and increase our response to the Palestinians’ urgent economic and humanitarian needs. Palestinians in Gaza, like people everywhere, have the right to protest peacefully. Israeli security forces have a responsibility to exercise maximum restraint.

At the same time, the indiscriminate launching of rockets and incendiary devices towards Israeli civilian

populations should stop. Despite the challenges, efforts towards peace must continue. The United Nations continues to support Egypt’s work towards Palestinian reconciliation.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remains a vital stabilizing factor in the Middle East and needs our continued support. We welcome the recent recommendation of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly in favour of renewing UNRWA’s mandate. We also call on Member States to intensify their support for and financial contributions to the Agency.

Speaking in the General Assembly two months ago (see A/74/PV.7), President Abbas announced his intention to set a date for Palestinian elections. It will be essential for those elections to take place across the occupied Palestinian territory, including in occupied East Jerusalem and Gaza, in line with the relevant legislation, international best practices, an agreed national political platform and existing agreements, including the Oslo Accords.

I join the Secretary-General in stressing the need for bold action. We must reject those who seek to deny the historic links of Palestinians or Israelis with the land, and we must revive negotiations on the two-State solution — the only way to fulfil the legitimate national aspirations of both peoples.

The United Nations will continue to work with the parties and all partners towards this essential goal.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Chef de Cabinet for her important statement and for having delivered an important message from the Secretary-General. I would ask her to convey the sincere gratitude of the Committee to the Secretary-General for his personal efforts every day to make headway on the two-State solution and to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

**Mr. Mansour** (Palestine): Before I read out the statement of His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas on this occasion, I would like to inform the Committee that we will be circulating an English translation of the statement to everyone in the room.

I shall now read out the statement of His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas to this meeting.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

“For more than 70 years, the Palestinian people have endured many tragedies and crises. Our people have suffered sacrifice, pain and displacement; they have been steadfast and have struggled; and they have been martyred and imprisoned while defending their history, their homeland and their holy sites. However, they remain undeterred in their struggle and journey and in their belief in their national aspirations and goals, in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy.

“We have accepted international legislation and international law as the arbiter for resolving the conflict. We have accepted the path of negotiations, dialogue, political engagement and peaceful popular resistance as a means to resolve all final-status issues and to achieve a peace agreement that leads to independence and ends the occupation and the conflict.

“However, all the while, Israel, the occupying Power, has only pursued delaying tactics and bad-faith actions since the conclusion of the Oslo agreement. Moreover, the current Israeli Prime Minister has expressed his rejection of the two-State solution and actively pursued annexation and settlement activities in our occupied land to undermine that solution. That Government has also persisted in its efforts to alter the identity and character of East Jerusalem, the capital of our State. It has promulgated discriminatory and racist laws, has, through its blockade, isolated Gaza from the rest of our country and from the world, has suffocated our economy and has stolen our money and natural resources. It has violated all the political, economic and security agreements it has entered into.

“Once again, we are witness to the United States Administration violating international law, thereby proving that it is unqualified to be an honest broker. Two weeks ago, the United States Secretary of State declared that Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, do not contravene international law. We and the international community at large have rejected that position. It is null and void and illegitimate. It stands in complete contravention of international

law and resolutions of international legitimacy, especially Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). Such unlawful statements and decisions by the United States only embolden the Israeli Government to perpetuate its occupation, increase its settlement activities and commit further crimes under the Rome Statute and breaches of international resolutions.

“I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to all States and international organizations that have condemned or rejected the statement and settlement activities as whole, which constitute a flagrant violation and grave breach of United Nations resolutions and international law. The international community has rejected the statement, as it has the United States attack on the international consensus and the terms of reference of the peace process and that country’s policy regarding Jerusalem. It has also offset the undermining of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East by providing financial and political support to the Agency and renewing its mandate. All those actions are an unequivocal message that the Palestinian people are entitled to freedom and justice and that all peoples in the region are entitled to just and lasting peace.

“International law is the cornerstone of the multilateral order and does not allow double standards or misinterpretation. Treating Israel as a State above the law has only encouraged it to continue to behave as an outlaw State. The international community must immediately shoulder its responsibilities and put an end to the Israeli aggression against our land, our existence and our future. It is time for concrete measures to protect the Palestinian people and fulfil their right to self-determination, freedom and independence on the land that has been occupied since held in 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It is time for the States around the world that believe in the two-State solution and recognize Israel to also recognize the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Has the time not yet come to end the longest military occupation in contemporary history? Do Palestinians not have a right, like all peoples, to their independent sovereign State? Do they not have a right to see an

end to the ordeal of the refugees who were forcibly uprooted from their homes in 1948?

“We convey our gratitude to the States that have reiterated their commitment to international law and United Nations resolutions. We call on all members of the international community to meet its obligations by not recognizing the illegal situation arising from Israel’s illegal policies and practices in occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and by not providing any assistance and support that would cause the situation to become entrenched. All States must distinguish between the territory of the occupying Power and the territory being occupied and ensure accountability.

“I recall that we continue to extend our hand for the realization of a just peace based on United Nations resolutions and the two-State solution along 1967 borders. We have never rejected negotiations and we presented our peace initiative to the Security Council in February 2018 (see S/PV.8183), in which we called for the convening of an international peace conference and for the establishment of an international multilateral mechanism to assist the parties to the negotiations in resolving all final status issues and to provide guarantees that agreements would be implemented within a specific time frame with a view to achieving a just and lasting peace based on the internationally endorsed parameters.

“Despite decades of disappointment, we remain committed to a multilateral order that respects, international law and ensures its enforcement. The State of Palestine will continue to engage in all efforts to further strengthen the rule of international law, including the strengthening of our institutions, the spread of the culture of peace and the empowerment of our people, especially women and youth. We will also continue our efforts to unify our land and people through the elections that we called for and are working to organize in the next few months with the aim of achieving a single authority, a single law and a single legitimate force.

“The Palestinian people will neither disappear nor accept oppression and injustice as their fate. Our people will continue their legitimate struggle against the colonial occupation of our land and people and the denial of our inalienable rights, including our right to self-determination.

Likewise, we will not abandon the culture of peace and tolerance that is deeply rooted within us and will continue to combat terrorism in our region and in the world.

“On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we again convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all countries, Governments, organizations and peoples that have expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people, supported their struggle and bolstered their determination and steadfastness in their bleakest hours as they face the toughest challenges.”

*(spoke in English)*

I have concluded reading out the statement of President Mahmoud Abbas. I have not seen the Secretariat circulate the English version. I would therefore appeal for everyone to be handed a copy.

**The Chair** *(spoke in French)*: I ask the Observer of the State of Palestine to convey our greetings and sincere thanks to President Mahmoud Abbas for his important message. I would also like to assure President Abbas, and through him the Palestinian people, that the Committee is firmly determined to continue its efforts pursuant to the mandate from the General Assembly to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and the realization of the Palestinian people’s inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination in an independent Palestinian State.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank once again the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council and the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General for taking part in this important meeting and for their messages of solidarity with the Palestinian people. In addition, I welcome the robust presence of my colleagues today.

I shall now briefly suspend the meeting in order to allow our guests to take their leave.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 10.55 a.m.*

**The Chair** *(spoke in French)*: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Kshenuka Dhireni Senewiratne, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human

Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

**Ms. Senewiratne** (Sri Lanka): I am pleased to address this special meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and thank Mr. Cheikh Niang, Permanent Representative of Senegal and Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the invitation to address this gathering in Sri Lanka's capacity as Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

We are here today bound by a common purpose to seek ways towards a peaceful and equitable solution to the question of Palestine. We are here today driven by compassion and concern for the people of Palestine, especially its children, and also because we are inspired by the resilience and strength that they continue to demonstrate.

In Amman in June this year, civil society representatives, victims and witnesses briefed the Special Committee on the situation of human rights within the occupied Palestinian territories and the occupied Syrian Golan. Those testimonies brought to the attention of the Committee the daily cycle of violence and hardship, where every aspect of life continues to be impacted by the unlawful occupation. The Committee has noted with concern the escalation of human rights violations, including violence as a result of settler expansion and the grave humanitarian crisis in Gaza from the ongoing blockade and closure.

Earlier this month, the Committee presented its fifty-first report (A/74/356), pursuant to resolution 73/96. The report provides an update on a number of issues of concern, notably the continued expansion of Israeli settlements, the destruction and confiscation of Palestinian property, the increase in settler violence, the continued use of administrative detention of Palestinians, including children, the exploitation of natural resources, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the lack of accountability for violations. In view of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child this year, the Committee focused part of its report on the human rights situation of Palestinian children.

In Gaza, where half of the population of 1.9 million are children, 29 children were killed and 4,387 injured

during demonstrations between 1 September 2018 and 29 August 2019. In the West Bank, six children were killed and 1,238 injured in the same period.

The report also covers the deteriorating situation in Gaza, where the Committee is concerned about the excessive use of force against demonstrators, which has resulted in 138 Palestinians killed and 15,901 injured since September 2018. The Gaza blockade, which is entering its thirteenth year, has resulted in severe restrictions on the freedom of movement of people and goods and serious consequences for access to health care and medicine. The Committee also remains concerned about the denial and delay of exit permits to Palestinians to access medical services and other restrictions imposed in that regard.

In addition, according to testimonies, increasing land seizures, the demolition of Palestinian homes, the denial of building permits, restrictions on movement, the use of arbitrary administrative detention and a lack of accountability for settler violence are some of the practices that continue to dismay the Committee.

The Special Committee joins the international calls for a just and lasting resolution of the question of Palestine, based on the two-State solution, with the peoples of Palestine and Israel living side by side, and an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. Both parties to the conflict must create the necessary environment to facilitate peace. There is an urgent need for mutual confidence-building measures to support efforts to resume dialogue and substantive negotiations. The safety of the civilian population in the occupied territories must be ensured in accordance with international law and practice.

Our support for Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 497 (1981) and 2334 (2016) regarding the question of Palestine and the implementation of all United Nations resolutions regarding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the end of occupation of the occupied territories and the cessation of all illegal settlement activities is reiterated.

Today we continue to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and hope that the spirit of goodwill will assist them to work together to preserve their national identity amid the immense difficulties that they endure. On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, let their resilience and strength of purpose inspire us, the international community, to rededicate our collective efforts and commitment



to forging a peaceful settlement on the question of Palestine. To that end we reaffirm our steadfast support for their cause as the people of Palestine strive to gain their legitimate rights and aspirations.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Senewiratne for her important statement. We are grateful for the Special Committee's contribution to this meeting and for Sri Lanka's active participation in our activities.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, who will read out a message from His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the pleasure of delivering this statement to you, Mr. Chair, and members of the Committee on behalf of Mr. Aboul Gheit, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, on this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

"It is my pleasure to be able to make this statement today, on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, designated by the General Assembly in its resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977, in order to reiterate a clear international and Arab message of opposition to the occupation and to reflect a strong global determination to put an end to the tragedy experienced by the Palestinian people and compensate them for the repeated catastrophes that they have endured for over 70 years.

"The League of Arab States is committed to commemorating this occasion, while highlighting the centrality of the Palestinian question for the Arab nation and consolidating international determination to stand alongside the people of Palestine in their just struggle, to support the considerable efforts made in defence of their rights and to uphold their quest to restore their freedom and ensure reparation for the historic injustices done to them by the Israel, the occupying Power.

"In recent years we have witnessed activities allegedly devised to bring about peace. However, it has now become clear that what was presented as peace is nothing but an expression of the Israeli right wing's vision to impose its solution and

consolidate its occupation, thereby bypassing international legality drawn up by the international community, including in the United Nations, to achieve a comprehensive political settlement to the question of Palestine, with the aim of creating an independent Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, through direct negotiations over the five final-status questions.

"The United States Administration has systematically put pressure on the Palestinian side exclusively, as a way of forcing it to accept a unilateral solution. Within that context, that Administration has adopted a series of illegitimate measures, the most recent being the Secretary of State's announcement that his country no longer considers West Bank settlements to be contrary to international law. That measure undermines any prospect, however modest it might be, of achieving just peace in the region, gives rise to alarming waves of violence and extremism in the region and contradicts the principles of international law, most notably the principle of the non-acquisition of territory by force, as well as relevant Security Council resolutions adopted over many years, most recently resolution 2334 (2016). The League of Arab States vehemently condemns that regrettable change in United States position. We stress that international law is defined by the collective will of the international community in its entirety, and not by an individual State, no matter how powerful it might be.

"The Arab League confirms that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory remains illegal, rejected and condemned by the entire world. The settlement activities were and will remain null and void legally. There is moral shame to be had by those who practice or support them, regardless of attempts to grant them questionable legality. The Arab League also condemns the series of successive unilateral measures recently adopted by the United States Administration, including the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the transfer of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem, the closure of the Palestinian Liberation Organization office in Washington, D.C., the cut-off of United States aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and attempts to destroy it as a prelude

to change the status of Palestinian refugees and withdrawing the files of Jerusalem and refugees from final-status negotiations. Such actions trample upon the foundations of international legitimacy, international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law — that is to say, the stable reference points for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

“For the first time in the Security Council, we have heard doubts expressed over the usefulness of resolution 242 (1967), despite the fact that that resolution, along with others, has formed the foundation of international legitimacy and opened the door to negotiations between Israel and its neighbours on the basis of the principle of land for peace. It is highly regrettable that the unilateral position taken by the United States Administration, which does not enjoy the support of the international community, has given Israel a green light to begin its plan to rule out the two-State solution by intensifying its oppression and occupation and stepping up illegal colonial settlement-building, as well as intensifying oppression and attacks against Palestinians and carrying out cold-blooded killings of protesters in the peaceful March of Return.

“The United States support for the Israeli position and its disregard for the established principles of all balanced peace processes have not weathered the magnitude of support of the international community for the Palestinian cause. International will is still very much behind a two-State solution, as shown by international consensus in the Security Council to reject the position of the United States, which is intent on legalizing settlement-building. That consensus was extended to the General Assembly, which by an overwhelming majority endorsed the renewal of UNRWA’s mandate to continue its vital work in providing services and protection for Palestinian citizens over the next three years. Similarly, the Court of Justice of the European Union has adopted a decision to identify products originating from Israeli settlers in the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, in an important step towards an embargo on products from Israeli settlements. Many political and regional groups, such as the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and others,

have also adopted positions of strong support for international legitimacy and the Palestinian people.

“On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People we reiterate, from the Arab League, our commitment to the just cause of the Palestinian people and our full support for their struggle and their leaders until an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital is created. From this rostrum, we express our appreciation to the States Members of the United Nations and others present that participated in today’s event, which demonstrates the support of the States and organizations they represent for the rights of the Palestinian people. They join us in sending a message of appreciation and admiration of the Palestinian people for their resilient struggle and sacrifices, and in trusting that the power of law prevails over the law of power as an expression of support of justice and peace values over injustice, aggression and occupation.”

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank His Excellency Mr. Abdulfattah Abdelaziz for his statement and like to ask him to convey to Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the sincere gratitude of the Committee for this important message and for the strong support that he provides to the activities of this Committee.

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Agshin Mahdeyef, Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations, who will deliver a message from Mr. Yusef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimen, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

**Mr. Mehdiyev** (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it is my pleasure to express the appreciation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; its Chair, Mr. Niang; and all its members for their continued commitment and tireless efforts to defend the just cause of the Palestinian people and to mobilize international support for that cause. As we highly esteem and appreciate the Palestinian people, who embody their sacrifice and belief in their just cause and who have held steadfast to their land while standing up for their rights, we call for greater international support for and solidarity with the them in realizing their legitimate rights and restoring their homeland.

This meeting has been held, under General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, every year since 1977 to mark 29 November as the International Day Of Solidarity With The Palestinian People. This an opportunity for all of us — States, organizations and peoples — to renew our ongoing commitment to the just Palestinian cause, strengthen our efforts and shoulder our collective responsibility to put an end to the Israeli occupation and its policy based on killings, forced displacement, ethnic cleansing, settlement construction, seizure of territories by force, destruction of dwellings and denial of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

As we meet today, we are witnessing a dangerous escalation in tensions in the Gaza Strip because of the attacks perpetrated recently by the Israeli occupation. This has generated scores of martyrs and injured many more, in flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and international agreements. Our organization calls on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities to provide international protection to the Palestinian people and to exert pressure on Israel to cease its repeated attacks.

The occupied city of Jerusalem has also witnessed serious developments as a result of the ongoing policy of Israel, the occupying Power, to change the city's legal, historic and political status and to cut it off from neighbouring Palestinian communities. This is in addition to the irresponsible position and decisions of certain States to side with Israel, the occupying Power, in a bid to further Judaize the occupied city of Jerusalem, in flagrant violation of relevant international law and United Nations resolutions.

We reiterate our rejection of the recent statement by the Secretary of State of the United States that Israel's settlement activities do not contravene international law. Indeed, they are in flagrant violation of international law and United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions, all of which confirm that the Israeli settlement activities are illegal and constitute a violation of the rights of the Palestinian people. We stress that this United States position, which demonstrates bias in favour of Israeli occupation, is a defiance of the international consensus and does not entail any right or added legality; rather, it undermines international law and efforts to achieve peace based on the vision of the two-State solution.

We reiterate our categorical rejection and strong condemnation of the statement made by the Israeli Prime Minister regarding Israel's intention to apply Israeli sovereignty to the Jordan Valley, the northern Dead Sea and settlements in the West Bank. We view such acts as a serious escalation and major assault on the historic and legal rights of the Palestinian people, with a view to undermining the possibility of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. The situation in Palestine is becoming all the more dangerous because of the unlawful decisions that have been taken to withhold Palestinian tax revenues. These decisions are acts of piracy and constitute collective punishment of the Palestinian people. They also violate the international law and Israeli obligations under signed agreements, leading to a deterioration in the humanitarian, financial and economic situation of the Palestinian people.

In that context, the OIC wishes to underscore that the absence of effective international measures to counter this will lead to impunity for the Israeli authorities and to the perpetuation of their discriminatory practices against the Palestinian people. Accountability is one of the tools that contribute to exerting the necessary pressure on Israel to end its occupation and honour its obligations under international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation supports the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for three additional years and calls on all States to ensure that their political agreement is reflected in financial contributions so that the work of UNRWA can continue to provide basic services to Palestinian refugees until the matter is definitively settled in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 194 (III).

The OIC reiterates its call on the international community to ensure that all its efforts and roles are in accordance with its commitment to the rule of international law — genuine and effective support for a political settlement based on a specific timeline and international legitimacy for the implementation of the two-State solution vision, in accordance with the agreed international terms of reference, including relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Mehdiyev for the important statement he has just made on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which continues to be an active partner of this Committee.

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Yashar Aliyev, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, who will deliver a message on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

**Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

On this day of solemn observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and its support for their inalienable human rights, including their rights to self-determination and independence, and renews its abiding commitment to seeking a fair and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and achieving genuine peace and security in the Middle East based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat for their important work and valuable assistance to that end, in line with their General Assembly mandates. Similarly, the Movement once again commends the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) to provide essential humanitarian, development and emergency assistance and protection to the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation. We also express our sincere appreciation to all United Nations agencies with special programmes that provide much-needed support to the Palestinian people, including children and women.

In June, we regrettably marked the fifty-second anniversary of the illegal Israeli military occupation in 1967 of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and other Arab territories. This week marks the seventy-second anniversary of the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 (II) to partition Mandate Palestine. In May, we marked the seventy-first anniversary of the 1948 Nakba that tragically befell the Palestinian people. These solemn occasions prompt the Non-Aligned Movement to reiterate its long-standing

calls for the exertion and intensification of all the necessary efforts to bring an end to this injustice and advance a peaceful and just solution.

The Ministerial Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement on Palestine convened in Baku in October to review the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Regrettably, the situation remains critical and unsustainable. The ministers underscored their deep regret that the Palestinian people continue to suffer under the brutal the military occupation, blockade and oppression of Israel and continue to be deprived of their fundamental human rights. All of their rights are being deliberately and systematically violated by the occupying Power, which continues its settlement and colonization of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, its oppression and collective punishment of the defenceless and innocent Palestinian children, women and men and its perpetration of grave human rights violations, many of which may amount to war crimes. That is causing deep trauma and suffering the among Palestinian civilian population, especially in the Gaza Strip, where the humanitarian situation is dire and the overall situation is becoming untenable and unliveable.

In its unanimously adopted political declaration, the Ministerial Committee renewed, inter alia, the Movement's calls for a cessation of all those violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in full compliance with international law and all the relevant resolutions and reaffirmed its abiding solidarity with, and unwavering support for, the inalienable rights and just cause of the Palestinian people. The Non-Aligned Movement stresses that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine remains a permanent responsibility of the United Nations until it is justly and satisfactorily resolved. We emphasize the need for urgent mobilization and the exertion of multilateral efforts to advance the realization of a political horizon and solution as well as alleviate the humanitarian and socioeconomic hardships being endured by the people of Palestine. We deeply regret that, despite decades of the Palestinian people's participation in peace efforts in good faith and their proven commitment to the two-State solution for peace and adherence to international law, as well as the painful compromises they have made, their plight has nevertheless worsened and a just solution remains elusive.



Given the fact that the Security Council remains paralysed on this issue despite the duties mandated to it by the Charter of the United Nations, the situation only continues to deteriorate and destabilize. This must be cause for grave concern among the international community and should prompt urgent action to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its violations and bring them to a halt. That includes Israel's illegal settlement activities in all parts of the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It is only through such action that we can salvage the prospects for peace, bring an end to the Israeli occupation and realize the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. All the relevant Security Council resolutions and the obligations under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, must be implemented.

In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement wishes to express its strong objection to, and rejection of, the United States Administration's recent announcement, made by the Secretary of State on 18 November, concerning Israel's illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. We reaffirm the illegality of the Israeli settlements and all settlement activities, as well as the validity of all the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), and consider that statement made by the United States to have no legal effect and to be null and void. NAM also condemns the provocations and incitements by groups of extremist settlers, including against the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem, including in Al-Haram Al-Sharif, as well as the vandalizing of mosques and churches, which is fuelling tensions and religious sensitivities that run the risk of further destabilization. We call for respect of the sanctity of holy sites and for full respect of the historic and legal status quo that has been in place for decades.

Today the Non-Aligned Movement also reiterates its demand for the full and immediate lifting of the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israel, which continues to severely impair all aspects of life of the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza and constitutes massive collective punishment. Moreover, we reiterate our grave concern about the lack of accountability for the countless violations being committed by Israel — the occupying force — including the killing and injuring

of innocent and defenceless Palestinian civilians. That includes the killing and injuring of children and women in their homes, as we painfully witnessed in recent days. Such lack of accountability fuels a culture of impunity and destabilizes the situation on the ground while diminishing the prospects for peace. Addressing these grave violations and bringing an end to this unjust situation requires the urgent attention and action of the international community. The solidarity of the international community with the just Palestinian cause must be directed to all relevant efforts in support of the independence and the sovereignty of the State of Palestine in all of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and in support of the admission of Palestine to the United Nations as a fully-fledged Member State.

In conclusion, on this important day the Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its unwavering commitment to a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and a long-overdue objective of the Movement.

In that regard, we reaffirm today our unwavering commitment to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the heroic Palestinian people to self-determination and their right to their independent and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees on the basis of resolution 194 (III).

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the Mission of the African Union to the United Nations, who will deliver a message from His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

**Ms. Mohammed** (African Union): Permit me to start by thanking the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for having organized the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Today's meeting is an opportunity once again to raise awareness among the international community on the unresolved question of Palestine and reiterate our solidarity with the Palestinian people. I wish also to commend you, Mr. Chair, for your continued commitment and tireless leadership at the helm of the Committee.

I now have the pleasure and honour to read out the solidarity message of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

“It gives me great pleasure to be with you today for this annual observance day when the African Union Commission renews its shared solidarity with the people of Palestine. The continent and its people, like all peace-loving people in the world, salute the courage and determination of the Palestinian people and support their yearnings for statehood, freedom and justice.

“The Commission calls for an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. We call for the immediate implementation of all Security Council resolutions on Palestine adopted since 1947, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), on ending all armed conflicts and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, as well as those upholding the human rights of Palestinian refugees and prisoners to humanitarian assistance.

“The Commission calls on all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict to desist from unilateral policies, actions and provocations that could further exacerbate the security situation and tense atmosphere in the Middle East and to adhere to the spirit of the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002.

“The Commission further condemns the incessant attacks on and violations of the human rights of innocent people under any guise and calls on the international community to fully assume its responsibility to protect innocent people by compelling Israel to comply with international law.

“All parties must recognize that there is no military solution to this long-standing conflict. A just and peaceful lasting solution to the conflict can be achieved only through already established principles, based on the existence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and harmony, within the framework of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

“The African Union Commission wishes to reiterate its commitment to working jointly with the international community to reach a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.”

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed for her very important statement

conveying the important message of the African Union Commission, which remains a valuable partner of our Committee.

I now give the floor to Mr. Eugene “Gus” Newport, United States activist for social justice. He was the Mayor of Berkeley, California, from 1979 to 1986, and is the former Director of the Boston social housing programme. In addition, he is a former member of the Advisory Council on Hurricane Katrina, in 2005, and a member of the academic faculty of Yale University, MIT and the University of California. He also received the 2019 Award for Individual Achievement from the Arab American Institute Foundation. He will speak as a representative of civil society.

**Mr. Newport:** It is with gratitude and deep respect that I come before the Committee today. Having served on a committee on the question of Palestine, I have a deep feeling for the people of Palestine, and I shall with all of my power work for the just cause of the people of Palestine in their pursuit of a free Palestine through a two-State solution.

My history, starting with the civil-rights movement here in the United States and expanding to being the Vice-President from the United States to the World Peace Council and a participant in conferences of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, has taught me about the plight of the Palestinian people.

In 1980, when I was the Mayor of Berkeley, California, Berkeley passed a ballot measure making us the first city in the United States to divest from apartheid South Africa. In 1983, still during my tenure as Mayor, with the assistance of both Jewish and Palestinian students from the University of California, Berkeley, we put an initiative on the ballot titled Measure E. The initiative stated that if it passed, I, as the Mayor of Berkeley, would send a letter to the President of the United States and the Secretary of State on behalf of the people of Berkeley requesting that the United States Government cease sending any tax dollars to Israel for development in the settlements. Such distinguished persons as Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn came to Berkeley to campaign with us. As the Committee can imagine, millions of dollars were spent to defeat the initiative, and it failed. But other cities, such as Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, followed Berkeley’s lead, and Cambridge became the first city in the United States to vote against United States dollars for development in the settlements.

I was also inspired in this work by the words of Nelson Mandela, who saw the parallels between South Africa and Israel. In 1988, I and three Jewish friends, two professors and a photographer travelled to Palestine and Israel during the intifada. We spent 10 days there. In Ramallah, we met with university students and business shop owners. We witnessed a group of young Palestinians throwing rocks at the Israeli police, and, because we attempted to take pictures, the military shot at us. Of course, we were advised that they were shooting only rubber bullets, as though the velocity of rubber bullets could not do great harm.

In East Jerusalem, we held meetings in hotels, visited the wall and a few mosques. We went to Gaza and witnessed the most horrific scenes that I have ever seen. Streams of feces ran right in front of the United Nations hospital, and Palestinian youngsters played in them. We stayed with Palestinians who supported the revolution, and Israeli soldiers came looking for us. We visited a prison that had a ceiling so low that we had to crawl to get in to talk with the prisoners. One of the prisoners was a revolutionary poet who had been imprisoned for 17 years. Two days after our return to Ramallah, we were invited to a Palestinian home where a celebration was taking place. To our great surprise, the brother poet had been released and all were celebrating.

I appeared at a panel discussion at Tel Aviv University that was videotaped. The following day, I was pushed off the sidewalk by some Israelis. It was suggested that I was recognized. When we were departing from Tel Aviv airport, I was pulled out of line and told that they would have to strip-search me. They put me in a small booth, pulled the curtain and told me to take off all of my clothes. I opened the curtain and said that if I had to strip, I wanted everyone to see me. After two hours of going back and forth, the pilot came off of the plane and told the authorities that he had to take off and that if they did not let me go, he would have to take off and I would be left behind. They finally let me go.

When I boarded the plane, some of the passengers told me that they were sorry, but that ever since Jesse Jackson had met with Yasser Arafat, the authorities were concerned about black Americans. I advised them that, as a member of the World Peace Council, I had met with Arafat three times in Geneva at United Nations meetings and that, after what I witnessed in Gaza, I would gladly meet with him again.

When I returned to the United States, I received a call from Barbara Lubin, who had served as President of the Berkeley school board while I was mayor. Barbara, who was Jewish and raised by a father who was a lawyer and pro-Israel, took a trip to Israel before I did. It was she who planned my trip to the Middle East. When she returned, she called me, screaming and asking why I did not advise her of the practices of Israel. My response was that she should know her people better than I did. Following up, she asked if she could use my name to invite major activists to support the creation of the Middle East Children's Alliance. I said yes. The response has been overwhelming.

The Middle East Children's Alliance was originally founded to build playgrounds so that Jewish and Palestinian children could learn to play together, but we eventually changed to assisting with the building of better water systems in Gaza and other important needs. I have been the President of the Middle East Children's Alliance for 30 years. Edward Said contacted me and, after several talks, asked me to join the Committee on the question of Palestine at the United Nations, and I did so.

Malcolm X was one of my mentors in my twenties. We are doing a film on the last three years of his life, when he and Martin Luther King, Jr., were very close, as Malcolm had abandoned black nationalism and joined the civil rights movement, even though Malcolm always stated that he felt that the fight was for human rights, not civil rights. Danny Glover is the executive producer of this film. One story I wanted to share is a meeting at Sidney Poitier's house at which Malcolm X, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Juanita Poitier and Dr. King's lawyer Clarence Jones were present. Dr. King was on the phone, as he had been arrested once again for demonstrating in Florida. It was agreed at that meeting that Malcolm, as he often did, would visit the United Nations and ask that they accept a request for an appeal against American hegemony, imperialism and colonialism. That phone call was wiretapped by John Edgar Hoover, and Malcolm was assassinated 35 days later. We have the wiretap and other police and Federal Bureau of Investigation files.

I share that story as I have been an activist most of my life, due to my grandmother having exposed me to the American way. Her mother was a slave. She raised me to love all people and to pursue education, although she had only attended school up to the fourth grade. That was due to an incident involving a white teacher,

after my grandmother had arrived late to school after picking cotton.

As human beings who all aspire to a better life in freedom, it is our duty to pursue a just life for the Palestinian people. That will require love, strategy and ensuring that the United Nations live up to the standard for which it was founded.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Newport for having accepted our invitation to speak before the Committee and for his poignant and important statement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all civil society organizations worldwide that are dedicated to resolving the Palestinian issue for their precious work in support of, and in solidarity with, the Palestinian people.

I have the honour to announce that the Committee has received messages of support and solidarity from a great many Heads of State and Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments and organizations. I would like to read out the list of senior officials who have sent such messages, in the order in which they were received.

We have received messages from the Heads of State of the following countries: the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Tunisia, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Mali, the Kingdom of Morocco, Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, the State of Qatar, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Indonesia, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Maldives, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, Brunei Darussalam, the Republic of Algeria and the Republic of Senegal.

We have received messages from the Heads of Government of the following countries: Malta, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Mauritius, the Kingdom of Thailand and the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The Committee has also received messages from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the following countries: the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Cuba, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mexico, the Philippines, the Republic of Ecuador, the Republic of Botswana and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

We have also received messages from the following Governments: the Republic of the Congo, Brazil, the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Costa Rica, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Namibia and South Africa.

The Committee has also received messages from the following intergovernmental organizations: the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the African Union.

All the messages of solidarity received will be updated and posted on the website on the question of Palestine maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights, [unispal.un.org](http://unispal.un.org).

On behalf of the Committee, I sincerely thank the Heads of State and Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments and the organizations that I have just mentioned, as well as all participants, for their tireless efforts to end the ongoing 52-year occupation of the Palestinian territory, and to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. I also thank them for their unwavering support for the activities the Committee carries out in accordance with its mandate.

Before concluding, I would like to thank everyone who helped organize this meeting, in particular the staff members of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Public Information, the Office of Central Support Services, the interpreters and all those who work behind the scenes.

On 3 December, at 10 a.m., the General Assembly will begin its debate on the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", during which I will introduce draft resolutions on this agenda item, and our Rapporteur ad interim will introduce the annual report of the Committee (A/74/35). I urge delegations to attend that debate, mobilize, be present and support the adoption of the draft resolutions in the afternoon of 3 December.

I would also like to invite representatives to the inauguration of a photography exhibit entitled *Palestine: the Most Universal of National Causes*. Through the words of public political figures, the exhibit explores the roots and depth of solidarity with the Palestinian cause and its universal scope. It will showcase human rights defenders and activists from a broad range of



disciplines, including politicians, artist and athletes. The opening of the exhibit is scheduled for 1 p.m. in the Public Lobby of the General Assembly Building, followed by a reception in the Delegates Dining Room, on the fourth floor.

Given the importance of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which has allowed us this opportunity to show our solidarity, I would like to invite representatives to

attend the opening of the exhibit, where I hope to see many of those present today.

Finally, I would like to welcome the presence of many representatives of Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations, who have come here from the Middle East to be with us today and participate in consultations within the Committee.

*The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.*