



# General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

**42**<sup>nd</sup> plenary meeting  
 Wednesday, 1 December 2021, 3 p.m.  
 New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Shahid . . . . . (Maldives)

*In the absence of the President, Mrs. Cedano (Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

## Agenda item 39 (continued)

### Question of Palestine

**Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/76/35)**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/76/299)**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/76/309)**

**Draft resolution (A/76/L.14)**

**Mr. Alateek** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*):  
 At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's thanks to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Ambassador Cheikh Niang, for his report (A/76/35), whose issuance my delegation welcomes.

It has been more than 75 years since 1945, when the United Nations was established, and almost 70 years since the question of Palestine, entered the agenda of the United Nations, making it the oldest item still on that agenda. We reaffirm the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, regaining their legitimate rights, including the legitimate right to establish an independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, pursuant to relevant Security Council

resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, which developed a road map towards a two-State final solution, with the establishment of the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders. We also stress that the international community must shoulder its responsibilities to compel Israel to respect the resolutions of the international community on ending its occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, the Golan and Lebanon.

It is regrettable that the Israeli occupation authorities continue to violate the rights of the Palestinian people and commit the most heinous crimes against them, using excessive force against defenceless people. Continuously building Israeli settlements despite the adoption of many resolutions that call for an end to settlement activity is a violation and shows clear disregard for the international community. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia therefore calls upon the international community to assume its responsibilities for protecting the Palestinian people and helping them to regain their usurped rights.

We reiterate our rejection of all Israeli plans and measures to confiscate Palestinian homes and put them under Israeli sovereignty. We also reject raids on Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which violate its sanctity and attempt to obliterate its Arab and Islamic identity. These aggressive Israeli measures will definitely undermine the chances for peace.

The Israeli occupying Power's policy of settlement-building and colonial expansion on Palestinian territories will destroy the potential for peaceful coexistence. Further, the unilateral measures adopted

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by Israel on Palestinian territory will undermine security and stability particularly in Palestine, as well as regional security in the Middle East in general. We therefore believe that the best means to achieve security and stability is the resumption of negotiations towards the establishment of the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its successive leaders have always taken the historical stance of supporting the question of Palestine and the Palestinian people, based on the premise that the question of Palestine is a fundamental and essential one in our foreign policy and will remain a pivotal and important one until the Palestinian people regain their rights and land, and until the goal of the establishment of the Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital is realized.

I would like to thank the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for its tireless efforts, despite the risks and the difficult conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories resulting from the crackdown by the occupation authorities. I therefore call upon everyone to provide the necessary support to UNRWA so that it can continue to fulfil its humanitarian action in the occupied territories.

In conclusion, I call upon the States Members of the United Nations to support and sponsor the draft resolution A/76/L.14, entitled “The peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine” submitted by the sisterly Republic of Senegal under the current agenda item.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this item.

I would like to remind members that the consideration of draft resolution A/76/L.14 will take place following the conclusion of the debate on agenda item 38, “The situation in the Middle East”.

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/76/194 and A/76/299)**

#### **Draft resolutions (A/76/L.15 and A/76/L.16)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/76/L.15 and A/76/L.16.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express Egypt’s appreciation for holding today’s meeting on agenda item 38, entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, which includes two draft resolutions, “The Syrian Golan” (A/76/L.15) and “Jerusalem” (A/76/L.16), which Egypt is submitting to the General Assembly for consideration.

As we aspire to achieve the goals of the United Nations on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization, as well as those of the Charter of the United Nations, which sets forth the principles of respect for the sovereignty of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and supporting regional integration, the Middle East has yet to fulfil these Charter-enshrined principles and objectives. The crises in the region should not divert attention away from the core questions that represent the foundation of stability in the Middle East, especially the issue of liberating Arab territories occupied in 1967.

It will be impossible to stop the downward spiral in the Middle East without respecting the rules of international law and international resolutions. The first step that must be taken in that regard is to end the occupation of all Arab territories occupied on 5 June 1967, specifically the occupied Palestinian territories and the occupied Syrian Golan.

The international community must take a serious stance with regard to upholding international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy, in addition to the United Nations resolutions reaffirming the inadmissibility of the annexation of territories by force and the rejection of any unilateral measure or demographic change in the territories under occupation.

The current developments in the Arab region run contrary to every principle enshrined in the Charter. Decades have gone by and the international community remains unable to implement the resolutions that it has

adopted on the question of Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan.

In affirmation of its commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the importance of achieving security, peace and stability in the Middle East, Egypt has been submitting a draft resolution on the Syrian Golan to the General Assembly on an annual basis. This year's draft resolution (A/76/L.15) contains the same language as last year's resolution 75/24, with some technical updates. It reaffirms Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and the principles of international law and the Charter, especially with regard to the inadmissibility of annexing territories by force. It reaffirms that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 applies to the occupied Syrian Golan.

In addition, the draft resolution affirms that settlement construction or any other Israeli activities in the occupied Syrian Golan constitutes a change in that area's demographic nature. It also emphasizes that Israel's continued occupation of the Syrian Golan is an obstacle to establishing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. It calls on Israel to resume peace talks and withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan up to the lines of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

It is self-evident that Jerusalem enjoys a special status in the context of the question of Palestine and is important to the Arab and Islamic world as the first Qibla and the third holiest shrine in Islam. Neither peace in the Middle East nor the settlement of the question of Palestine will be possible without the inclusion of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Since 1947, all United Nations resolutions have included provisions on the status of the city. However, all those resolutions, whether they were adopted by the General Assembly or the Security Council, remain unimplemented, in flagrant violation of international law and international legitimacy.

The most recent escalation between the two sides last May demonstrated that developments in Jerusalem can spark acts of violence at any time if the existing legal and historic status of the city under the custodianship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan over the holy sites is not maintained. Owing to its historic commitment to the question of Palestine and the importance of achieving security and peace in the holy city, Egypt is pleased to submit draft resolution A/76/L.16, entitled "Jerusalem",

to the General Assembly this year, despite the fact that it was not submitted in the past two years as we sought cooperation with both the brotherly Palestinian and Jordanian delegations to achieve the highest level of consensus among Member States.

Overall, the current draft resolution retains the language of resolution 73/22, submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session in 2018, with limited amendments reflecting developments on the ground since then. It refers to the previous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions rejecting any measure or law adopted by Israel to change the character of the city and its current legal and historic status. It also includes references to Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and its provisions on rejecting any change to the 1967 borders, including in Jerusalem, unless agreed by the two parties through negotiations.

The draft resolution also reaffirms the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 to the occupied territories, as well as the 2004 advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (see A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1). It rejects the expansion of Israeli settlements, the demolition of Palestinian buildings and homes and the eviction of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem, especially in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods. The draft resolution also rejects Israeli excavations around and on the premises of holy sites. In addition, it refers to the 2015 Security Council press statement (SC/12052) on the situation in Jerusalem.

The draft resolution reaffirms that all measures that have been taken to alter the character of the city are null and void and must stop. It stresses that any lasting solution for the city of Jerusalem should take into account the rights of both parties and the freedom of worship of the three monotheistic religions. It is also important to end incitement, especially in areas of religious sensitivity. Furthermore, it is important to maintain the existing legal and historic status of the holy city.

Egypt hopes that all Member States will vote in favour of the two draft resolutions on the Syrian Golan and Jerusalem, respectively, to collectively reaffirm the importance of complying with international law, rejecting the forceful annexation of the territory of

others and upholding the United Nations resolutions and the Charter so that peace and stability can be achieved in the Middle East.

**Mr. Adam** (Maldives): I thank the President for convening this important plenary meeting on the situation in the Middle East.

Since its twenty-fifth session in 1970, the General Assembly has considered the item on the situation in the Middle East on a yearly basis. However, after more than five decades of discussion in the Assembly, the situation in the Middle East remains marred by conflict and ongoing violence. The question of Palestine remains unresolved and the conflicts in Syria, Yemen and other parts of the region continue to cause devastation and destruction. The international community must do better to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

The question of Palestine has been before us for decades. However, the Palestinian people have yet to fully enjoy their basic rights and live lives of dignity and freedom. The reports of the Secretary-General on this agenda item highlight the further deterioration of the political, security and social situations in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory and the suffering of civilians.

The Maldives once again reaffirms its long-standing and steadfast commitment to Palestine's efforts for self-determination, serenity and independence. We believe that the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine within its pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side-by-side with Israel in peace and harmony is the only viable solution to the question of Palestine.

The Maldives also remains deeply concerned about the ongoing conflicts in Yemen and Syria. The humanitarian toll of those conflicts has been catastrophic, causing a displacement crisis in the border regions. Millions of people have been forced to flee their homes to find refuge in neighbouring countries. As expected, those countries have faced several challenges in absorbing millions of refugees. Without the support of the international community, we cannot expect those countries to be in a position to continue to accommodate refugees in such large numbers.

A range of issues, from economic disparity to ongoing conflicts, has also made it difficult to combat the coronavirus disease pandemic in the region. That

has also greatly impacted the vaccination rate in the region. While some States of the region were among the first in the world to receive vaccines, war-torn States were not able to implement concrete plans for procuring and distributing vaccines, despite their being among the worst affected by the pandemic.

The international community simply must do better. Talk is not enough. Humanitarian and economic support is essential, but that too is not enough. Comprehensive peace in the Middle East requires a political solution and the political will to pursue it. We therefore renew our heartfelt call on the international community to intensify efforts to achieve a long-lasting and stable political solution to the conflict in the region. That is the only way to restore a sustainable international order with prosperity and durable peace, for the peace of the region.

**Mr. Al Omoush** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President once again for the able way in which he is guiding this session. I will be brief and limit myself to the following remarks.

First, the Israeli violations against the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif constitute an ongoing breach of international law and the current legal and historic status. We warn against the danger of Israel's actions against the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which could have repercussions throughout world, as they represent provocation to all Muslims. The Al-Aqsa Mosque/ Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which spans an area of 144,000 square metres, is an exclusive place of worship for Muslims.

The Jordanian Administration of Jerusalem's Awqaf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs has the exclusive legal authority to manage the Al-Haram Al-Sharif and regulate access to it. The Hashemite custodianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds represents a historical duty and responsibility that we proudly uphold, and we will continue to shoulder that responsibility under the guidance of His Majesty King Abdullah II and to strengthen the resilience of the citizens of Jerusalem. We also oppose all attempts to impose a fait accompli or change the historical and legal status of the holy sites, especially the Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

Secondly, there can be no comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East without ending the occupation of the Syrian Golan, in line with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.



The position of the international community on the Golan is clear and is underscored in Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which rejects the annexation and occupation of the Golan by Israel and considers the laws and authority that have been imposed by Israel on the Golan as illegitimate.

**Mr. Al Hassan** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my honour to deliver this statement while the General Assembly discusses agenda item 38, “The situation in the Middle East”.

In light of my statement at this morning’s meeting on the question of Palestine (see A/76/PV.41), I want to specifically focus in this statement on the Syrian Arab Golan. I would like to note that the Secretary-General, in his report (A/76/194), calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to withdraw entirely from the all the Syrian Golan in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In the Sultanate of Oman, we subscribe to the international position that rejects the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan. We therefore consider that all past and current measures taken by the occupying Power are illegal and null and void and in contravention of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the international conventions and resolutions.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate the need to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic. We reject all forms of interference, regardless of the source, that undermine the sovereignty and independence of our brotherly Arab country.

**Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I sincerely thank my brother, the Permanent Representative of the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt, for introducing draft resolution A/76/L.15, entitled “The Syrian Golan”, and draft resolution A/76/L.16, entitled “Jerusalem”, under today’s agenda item. Our thanks also go to all Member States that have sponsored the draft resolution on the Syrian Golan.

For more than five decades and through its annual resolutions, the General Assembly has continuously called on Israel, the occupying Power, to end its occupation of the Syrian Golan and reaffirmed that all measures taken by Israel to impose its laws, authority and administration over the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal, null and void and have no legal effect whatsoever.

The rightful position taken by the General Assembly, in line with the principles and purposes of our Organization, was emphasized by the Security Council in resolution 497 (1981) which also rejected the provocative unilateral decision of the occupying Power to annex the occupied Syrian Golan. Moreover, the resolution considered that decision null and void and had no legal effect whatsoever.

However, the insistence of Israel, the occupying Power, on not abiding by the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions has led to an unacceptable failure by the United Nations to compel Israel to end its occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan. That is due to the protection umbrella and impunity provided by the United States of America and certain other States to Israel, providing it with unlimited support at the United Nations and beyond.

The continued defiance by Israel of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the unlimited paralysis of the United Nations with regard to the implementation of its resolutions constitute real obstacles that prevent the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, along with security and stability. That only encourages the Israeli occupation authorities to pursue their criminal policies and aggressive acts against the Syrian Arab Republic.

My country, Syria, calls on the United Nations to take firm and immediate measures to ensure the implementation of its relevant resolutions in order to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan and other occupied Arab territories. That would lead in turn to an end to the violations committed by the occupying Power against Syrian sovereignty, as well as to its crimes of settlement expansion, demographic change, stealing resources, confiscating territories and property, killing, arbitrary detention, torture and other serious violations that together constitute the policy systematically implemented by the Israeli occupying Power in the occupied Syrian Golan for many decades now, while our people suffer every day under the occupation.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its strong attachment to its right to recover the entirety of the occupied Syrian Golan along the lines of 4 June 1967. That right is not subject to a statute of limitations and cannot be negotiated, nor can it lead to concessions. Moreover, Syria reiterates that all decisions and measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to

change the natural landmarks or demography of the Syrian Golan or to impose its laws and authority over it are null and void. Such decisions have no legal effect under international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In that connection, I reaffirm once again, on behalf of the Government of my country, our steadfast and principled position regarding our support for the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the creation of an independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. We reaffirm the importance of ensuring the right of return of refugees to their homes under international law, as well as the relevant United Nations resolutions, foremost of which is resolution 194 (III) of 1948. Palestine must be also granted full membership of the United Nations.

Most States Members of our Organization have, at some point in their history, fought to free themselves from foreign occupation of all kinds, to exercise their right to self-determination and to achieve their aspirations. We therefore call on the members of the General Assembly to vote today in favour of the draft resolutions contained in documents A/76/L.15, on the Syrian Golan, and A/76/L.14, on the question of Palestine. That will proudly reflect members' commitment to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and, in particular, the fundamental principle that forbids the annexation of territories by force. That will also reflect their commitment to ending the suffering of peoples living under occupation and to supporting their right to freedom.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the States that will vote in favour of the draft resolutions for their supportive and principled stance to champion a just cause.

**Mr. Pierre** (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the President of the General Assembly and the other members of the Bureau on their election. The Haitian delegation guarantees its full support and cooperation in the successful fulfilment of his mandate.

The Haitian delegation commends the Secretary-General for his action and dedication in the search for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis and has taken note of his report on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, contained in document A/76/299. My delegation also commends the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian

People for its work in carrying out the tasks entrusted to it under resolution 75/20 of 2 December 2020 and takes note of its report contained in document A/76/35.

*The President took the Chair.*

In paragraph 2 of resolution 75/20, the General Assembly requests the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to

“continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination ... and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people.”

In the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation to the Palestinian people, in particular, on poverty in the West Bank between 2000 and 2019, it is stressed that

“[t]he Palestinian people's right to statehood cannot be replaced by humanitarian and economic assistance, however, essential as those may be in the interim” (A/76/309, para. 57).

Moreover, the report maintains that the United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and other resolutions.

As the Haitian delegation has already affirmed before the Assembly on many occasions, Haiti remains committed to the founding principles of the United Nations, in particular Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Charter, which guarantees the right of peoples to self-determination. To that end, my delegation reiterates its full support for a comprehensive approach that could lead to a two-State solution in the context of Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Furthermore, we encourage the Israeli and Palestinian States to overcome their differences in order to build a better future for their respective populations. The Haitian delegation calls on the international community, actors in the region, the political leaders and civil society of both States to join efforts in order to reach a fair, sustainable, pragmatic and realistic solution to a crisis that has lasted far too long.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the ideal solution to the conflict would be one that allows the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to live side by side

in peace and security and to enjoy full sovereignty and independence.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. I would like to inform members that action on draft resolutions A/76/L.15 and A/76/L.16 will be taken after we take action on draft resolution A/76/L.14 under agenda item 39, “Question of Palestine”.

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

### Agenda item 39 (*continued*)

#### Question of Palestine

##### Draft resolution (A/76/L.14)

**The President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/76/L.14. Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Erdman** (United States of America): As President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken have repeatedly made clear, the United States believes that Israelis and Palestinians deserve equal measures of freedom, dignity, security and prosperity, both as an end in itself and as a means to advance towards a negotiated two-State solution. We are committed to supporting good faith initiatives to achieve that goal — in equal measures.

We believe that the practice of voting year after year on the same resolutions in the General Assembly does nothing to bring us closer to that goal. The majority of those texts are unbalanced and, in many ways, undermine the prospect of dialogue and cooperation. In doing so, they also damage the credibility of the United Nations.

I want to highlight one specific issue of serious concern, which is the reference to the holy sites in the Jerusalem text (A/76/L.16). The text only references Al-Haram Al-Sharif, rather than Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount, which is agreed terminology that recognizes the shared and diverse history of the holy site. The omission of that inclusive terminology is of real and sincere concern.

It is morally, historically and politically wrong for members of this organ to support language that

denies both the Jewish and the Muslim connections to Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount. As such, the United States will vote against the three draft resolutions before us today and encourages others to join us in supporting tangible and constructive measures to help achieve peace.

**Mr. Ghadirkhomi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation acknowledges the consideration of the draft resolutions under agenda items 38 and 39, which express strong support for the cause of Palestine, in particular the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

In addition to the failure to hold the occupying regime accountable for its crimes against the Palestinian people, it is extremely unfortunate that, despite the calls of the international community, no progress has been made towards ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands over the past years. The question of Palestine is the longest-standing crisis of our time, with no feasible conclusion in sight.

After more than seven decades, the Israeli regime continues to violate the fundamental human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and other Arabs living under its occupation. As a result, not only are Palestinians deprived of their land and property while being forcibly evicted, but they are also subject to violence, terror and intimidation.

Meanwhile, numerous initiatives have been taken by various concerned countries, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations in order to address the crisis and reduce the miseries of the Palestinian people. The adoption of numerous resolutions condemning the occupying regime, presenting different plans and initiatives, as well as the establishment of fact-finding missions, have all been in line with efforts to achieve that goal. Despite that fact, the Israeli regime’s non-compliance with the relevant international laws and regulations has prevented the international community from finding a just solution to the crisis.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that support to the Palestinian people must continue until they are able to realize their fundamental rights, in particular the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as it is capital.

Historical experience and developments of recent years have demonstrated that Palestinians have no choice but to continue their resistance against occupation, aggression and violations of their rights. We are of the view that the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland and holding a referendum for self-determination are the most effective solutions to the Palestinian question. Through that referendum, the Palestinian Muslims, Jews and Christians will be able to choose their own political system and enjoy their rights of fairly and equally.

Having stated our principled position today, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 38 and 39 and considers them a demonstration of the strong support of the international community for the cause of Palestine, in particular the realization of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Meanwhile, my delegation would like to reiterate the Palestinian people's inherent right to self-defence in the face of the Israeli regime's continued brutality and hostility against them.

Regarding the occupation of the Syrian 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 regime to undermine the territorial integrity of Syria and we express our deep concerns over the grave deterioration of the human rights situation and the increasing number of illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

While I have the floor, I would like to briefly respond to the statement made by the representative of Israel earlier today (see A/76/PV.41), which as usual, made unfounded allegations against a number of countries, including Iran. I have no intention of dignifying his claims with a response. The Israeli regime, which is the last apartheid regime and the only one in the world that openly practices and has legalized racism, has the longest history of opportunistic policies, misleading others and diverting attention from its inhuman and savage actions against innocent Palestinians and other nations in the Middle East.

It is very ironic that the regime that is infamous for its authorities' apartheid policies and war crimes, which are well-documented by various United Nations bodies and agencies, can allow itself to continue making false accusations against others and complain about the

condemnation of its actions. Against the backdrop of the shameful years of its history, the officials of the Israeli regime should not speak of their intentions for the type of settlement that they intend to arrive at with the Palestinian people, which can be boiled down to just a few words: occupation, brutality, massacres and the flagrant violation of the norms of humankind. We cannot ignore the fact that the Israelis' occupation and racism are the hurdle to overcoming all conflicts in the Middle East.

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/76/L.14, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

I 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 become sponsors of A/76/L.14: Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, The Gambia, Guinea, Indonesia, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and the State of Palestine.

**The President:** A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya,



Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, 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, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

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

*Abstaining:*

Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Czech Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Slovenia, South Sudan, Uruguay Vanuatu

*Draft resolution A/76/L.14 was adopted by 148 votes to 9, with 14 abstentions (resolution 76/10).*

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

**Ms. Henderson** (Australia): The Australian Government welcomes the condemnation in resolution 76/10 of rocket attacks against Israel. Terrorism or support for terrorist acts is never justified and should be condemned. Australia opposes one-sided resolutions that single out Israel and encourages further changes in language to the Palestinian package of resolutions.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

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/76/L.15 and A/76/L.16)**

**The President:** The Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions A/76/L.15 and A/76/L.16.

We turn first to draft resolution A/76/L.15, entitled "The Syrian Golan".

I 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 the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/76/L.15: Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Djibouti, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Somalia and the United Arab Emirates.

**The President:** A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, 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, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

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

*Abstaining:*

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tuvalu, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu

*Draft resolution A/76/L.15 was adopted by 94 votes to 8, with 69 abstentions (resolution 76/11).*

**The President:** We next turn to draft resolution A/76/L.16, entitled "Jerusalem".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly Affairs 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 become co-sponsors of A/76/L.16: Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, the Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Senegal, Somalia and Viet Nam.

**The President:** A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua And Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

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

*Abstaining:*

Albania, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, India, Kenya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Netherlands, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Togo, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

*Draft resolution A/76/L.16 was adopted by 129 votes to 11, with 31 abstentions (resolution 76/12).*

**The President:** 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. Eckersley (United Kingdom):** The United Kingdom's position on the status of Jerusalem is clear and long-standing: it should be determined in a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The final determination of Jerusalem must ensure that the holy city is a shared capital of Israel and a Palestinian State, granting access and religious rights to all who hold it dear. The United Kingdom opposes unilateral action in Jerusalem in the absence of a final status settlement and remains supportive of the historic status quo.

The United Kingdom recognizes that Jerusalem and the holy sites at Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount hold particular significance for many groups around the world, especially the three Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The United Kingdom welcomes language in resolution 76/12, reaffirming the special significance of the holy sites and the city of Jerusalem for those three religions and calling for respect for the historic status quo.

However, the resolution adopted today refers to the holy sites in Jerusalem in purely Islamic terms, without recognizing the Jewish terminology of Temple Mount. The United Kingdom has made it clear for many years that we disagree with that approach. While we welcome the removal of the majority of those references, we are disappointed that we were unable to find a solution to the final reference.

On principle, the United Kingdom has therefore changed its vote today from being in favour to abstaining. If the unbalanced reference had been removed, the United Kingdom would have been ready and willing to vote in favour of it. The United Kingdom is clear that that should not be misunderstood as a reflection of a change in the United Kingdom's policy towards Jerusalem, but instead it is an important signal of our commitment to recognizing the history of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions.

**Mrs. Aguiar Barboza (Brazil):** Brazil wishes to deliver the following explanation of vote regarding

resolutions 76/11 and 76/12, which the General Assembly has just adopted.

Brazil reiterates its support for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is based on a two-State solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Brazil recognizes and welcomes the efforts of the Observer Mission of Palestine and other facilitators to streamline their draft proposals and to reduce the number of draft resolutions currently under consideration in the General Assembly and its Second, Third and Fourth Committees.

With regard to resolution 76/12, Brazil reiterates its commitment to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Brazil believes, however, that the language of any resolution on Jerusalem should reflect the importance and historical significance of the holy sites of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions, especially Temple Mount and Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and should take into consideration their respective religious and cultural sensitivities.

**Mr. Kvalheim (Norway):** One of the resolutions adopted today refers to the holy sites in Jerusalem (resolution 76/12). Norway is concerned by worrying developments and recurrent violent clashes at the Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Norway recalls the special significance of the holy sites and calls for upholding the historic status quo for Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, in line with previous understandings and with respect to Jordan's special role.

Norway welcomes the new language in the resolution calling for respect for the historic status quo at the holy places of Jerusalem. We understand the language of the holy sites of Jerusalem to reflect the importance and historical significance of both the city of Jerusalem and the holy sites for the three monotheistic religions and we continue to expect that General Assembly and Security Council resolutions refer to Temple Mount and Al-Haram Al-Sharif in line with that understanding.

**Mrs. Breshanaj (Albania):** I will be very brief. I am taking the floor to explain our abstention in the voting on resolution 76/12, just adopted, entitled "Jerusalem".

Albania's position on the issues reflected in the text are well known, documented and coherent and we agree with its substance. Having said that, we would have preferred a more balanced terminology on such sensitive issues, namely the holy places in Jerusalem, recognizing the shared and diverse history of the people who live there so as to reflect the situation on the ground and respect the sensitivities of all sides.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote.

We will now hear those delegations wishing to make statements after the adoption of the resolution.

I give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

**Mr. Gonzato** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The EU wishes to thank the Palestinian delegation for the successful outcome of our negotiations on a number of resolutions on which action has been taken by the General Assembly. The EU welcomes the Palestinian Mission's decision to bi-annualize a number of resolutions under the agenda item "Question of Palestine". The EU strongly encourages the Palestinian Mission to further streamline the resolutions, including by reducing the number of these resolutions and the use of balanced language.

At this point in time, we would like to put on record that with regard to all resolutions that are adopted during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, the EU and its member States consider that, whenever the term "Palestinian Government" is mentioned, it is referring to the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, the use of the term "Palestine" in any of these resolutions cannot be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the member States on this issue and therefore on the question of the validity of an accession to the conventions and treaties mentioned in such resolutions.

Further, in relation to the resolution "Jerusalem" (resolution 76/12), we would like to express the following. The resolution adopted today makes reference to the holy sites in Jerusalem. The EU is concerned about repeated and severe violent incidents at and around 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 welcomes that the language on the holy sites of Jerusalem now reaffirms the importance and holiness of the city of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions. At the same time, the EU reiterates that, whenever referring to the Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif in the "Jerusalem" resolution, both terms, namely, the "Temple Mount" and "Al-Haram Al-Sharif", should be used. We therefore reiterate our call not to exclusively use the term "Al-Haram Al-Sharif" when referring to the Temple Mount/Al-Haram Al-Sharif in the "Jerusalem" resolution and in other texts.

In this context, the EU calls on all sides not to deny the historical ties of other religions to the city of Jerusalem and its holy places in an attempt to delegitimize their history. Any such steps would undermine the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

**Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina voted in favour of resolution 76/11 because it believes that the resolution's essential character is linked to the illegality of the acquisition of territory by force. Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use or threat of use of force against the territory or integrity of a State.

At the same time, I wish to clarify Argentina's position with respect to paragraph 6 of the resolution. Our vote does not prejudice the content of that paragraph, particularly the reference to the line of 4 June 1967. Argentina considers it important to make progress in the search for a solution to the Syrian-Israeli track of the Middle East conflict in order to put an end to the occupation of the Golan Heights. Therefore, the Government of the Argentine Republic reaffirms once again the importance of resuming negotiations to find a definitive solution to the situation in the Syrian Golan in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

**Mr. Mansour** (Palestine): By now, I think it is known to everyone that I am the representative of the State of Palestine, and that I am also the representative of the Observer State of Palestine in the United Nations system. Hopefully, we will soon become a full member within the United Nations system because it is our natural and legal right. It is only a matter of time before



we see the General Assembly's implementation of that position, since it was with a two-thirds majority of the Assembly that we changed our status to that of an Observer State.

Be that as it may, allow me to thank all those who voted in favour of the two resolutions related to the question of Palestine, "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine" and "Jerusalem" (resolutions 76/10 and 76/12). This overwhelming support by the international community is extremely appreciated by the Palestinian people, as has been reiterated over the years. I believe that it is now time for us — for the international community — to move from reiterating a principled position, which we as the Palestinian people and their leaders tremendously appreciate, to implementing, after 75 years of the Al-Nakba and 54 years of occupation, the overwhelming will demonstrated through the two resolutions related to the question of Palestine adopted this afternoon. We look forward to working with the Assembly to move from the theoretical position of reaffirming the minute details of the rights of the Palestinian people to beginning the process of the implementation.

No country represented in the United Nations should be above international law and above the wish of the overwhelming majority of nations that are saying that occupation has to end, that the independent State of Palestine should be established, and that the two-State solution should become a reality on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the global consensus on how to resolve this issue. I believe that the international community signalling the beginning of a process in that direction would send the appropriate message to the Palestinian people.

With regard to the resolution entitled "Jerusalem", it is a very appropriate resolution needed by the international community to give hope to and support the Palestinian people who steadfastly remain in the Holy City of Jerusalem, who are trying very hard to avoid descending into religious confrontation.

The position of the international community on Jerusalem, whether in the General Assembly or in the Security Council, is well known. It is important to note that resolution 76/12 purposefully contains language that reflects a position unanimously adopted by the Security Council. At any rate, we are grateful for what the General Assembly has done today and what the

Assembly's major committees did in days preceding today's adoption.

I can assure you, Mr. President, and all of my colleagues in this Hall, that Palestine is committed to peace. However, peace cannot be implemented by merely reiterating wonderful principles and reaffirming and legislating resolutions. We need to move in the direction of beginning to implement these resolutions in order to put an end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people and to create a new chapter in the Middle East, a chapter in which two States can live side by side in peace and tranquillity with each other on the basis of 4 June 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as our capital. We will then begin a new journey in which the two States and all States in the Middle East, the region beyond and the whole world will begin a process of starting to relate to other that is different than the way we relate now.

We will never accept to continue living under occupation in an apartheid system. We deserve freedom and dignity in our homeland, in our own sovereign independent State, and we thank the Assembly for helping us to bring that into reality.

But tomorrow is another day. Tomorrow, let us begin the journey of the implementation of the overwhelming will of the international community.

It was a long day, but it was a fruitful, positive day that will help the struggle of the Palestinian people and the cause of peace in the Middle East.

**The President:** The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. Ajeeb** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked for the floor first, to thank the Member States for their steadfast and principled support for the right of Syria to the Syrian Golan and for ending Israeli's occupation thereof while considering all its measures null and void.

Secondly, I wish to respond to the lies and misleading campaign launched by the representative of the Israeli occupation who, instead of being ashamed

of the military occupation by the Israeli authorities of Arab territories, including the Golan, along with their criminal and aggressive practices, tried to deflect attention by hurling false accusations against other States, including my country. He played the role of victim and blackmailed the feelings of the audience while the Israeli authorities continue to perpetrate all kinds of grave violations against international law.

In conclusion, the representative of the occupation authorities should be the last person to speak about

wasting the resources, efforts and time of our Organization, which could have avoided wasting its efforts for seven decades had his authorities committed themselves to international legitimacy resolutions, which have been reiterated today.

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

*The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.*