

**STATEMENT TO THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES**

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**AMBASSADOR CHEIKH NIANG  
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF  
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

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**CONFERENCE ON  
SUPPORTING THE CITY OF JERUSALEM AND ITS  
POPULATION - “RESILIENCE, DEVELOPMENT”**

Cairo, 12 February 2023

Excellency, Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit,  
Secretary General of the League of Arab States,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to thank the League of Arab States for organizing this 2023 Jerusalem Conference on “Resilience, Development” and for inviting me to participate, as Chair of our Committee.

The General Assembly established the Committee in 1975 to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people. Since its beginning in promoting Palestinian rights, the Committee has always been a strong advocate for the rights of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a city at the centre of the Question of Palestine. In implementing its mandate, the Committee recognizes East Jerusalem as an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, as affirmed in numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and as such a long-standing unresolved crucial item on the UN agenda.

This year we will solemnly mark the 56th anniversary of the 1967 Arab - Israeli war and the onset of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The continued Israeli occupation has resulted in the additional displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including from their homes in East Jerusalem, while Israel's illegal policies and practices, such as the ongoing settlement colonization, creeping annexation, displacement, dispossession, destruction of Palestinian property and deliberate demographic changes, are gravely undermining the rights of Palestinians, and a future of independence, sovereignty and contiguity for the Palestinian State and the realization of the two-State solution.

The Committee remains concerned over the high levels of violence we continue to witness throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, as well as alarming developments in recent weeks, with clashes, attacks, settler-related violence and Israeli military operations, which continue to cause civilian casualties, including among children. The year 2022 registered the highest number of Palestinian fatalities since the United Nations started systematically documenting them in 2005, with 154 Palestinian killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2022 according to OCHA.

The Committee expresses its concern that 2023 continues this dangerous cycle of violence on the ground amidst increased political tension and a stalled peace process. unlawful unilateral measures and provocations and incitement by Israelis, including at the Holy Sites in East Jerusalem, are the primary causes of the recent and rising levels of violence and instability. The Committee has called for the violence, provocations, including at Holy Sites and incitement of Israeli settlers, to stop and for all perpetrators to be held accountable. It stands firmly for preserving the historic and legal status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem as entrusted to the Hashemite custodianship and calls on Israel to respect international law, including the many relevant UN resolutions concerning Jerusalem.

Excellencies,

The intensely inflammatory atmosphere in the City demonstrates the urgent need to sustain international attention on the Question of Palestine, including Jerusalem, and on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People and mobilize the international community on tangible efforts to justly resolve the conflict.

The status of Jerusalem has always been central to the Committee's events, with considerable attention drawn to Israel to stop the policies aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of

the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem. Every year, the Committee organizes an international conference on Jerusalem, jointly with the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and with the participation of the League of Arab States.

The Conference on Jerusalem is one of the most critical events in the Committee's programme of work, designed to inform about the realities in occupied East Jerusalem and to remind the international community that the final status of Jerusalem must be a vital part of the resolution of the Palestine question.

A recent Committee conference on Jerusalem, titled "Annexation in Practice – Palestinian Lives in Jerusalem", addressed, with testimonies from affected Palestinians, including women and children, a wide range of crucial issues, such as forced demographic change in Jerusalem as a violation of Palestinian rights and international humanitarian law and a threat to peace. Last year's conference gave the opportunity to young Palestinian activists to discuss their views on the topic "Palestinian Youth in East Jerusalem under Occupation".

The Committee also uses its platform, including the Conferences of Jerusalem, to focus international attention on the plight of Palestinians in the occupied territory and as refugees in neighbouring countries. In this regard, the Committee has partnered with UNRWA to raise global

awareness of the Agency's crucial role as a lifeline for the 5.9 million Palestinian refugees and highlight its pivotal role in regional peace and stability. In Jerusalem, the Agency plays a crucial role in supporting the Palestinian people. It has delivered services and maintains facilities in East Jerusalem since 1950, providing essential education to Palestinian children in its schools in East Jerusalem and in the Jerusalem periphery. The Agency operates in a challenging environment due to the constant threat by Israeli authorities that seriously hamper its activities, including unlawful measures to shut down the Agency's activities in the City.

Let me once more appeal to the LAS and all its members here today to contribute and help to ensure sufficient and predictable funding for UNRWA to ensure the continuity of its vital support to Palestine refugees, pending a just solution for their plight in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

Excellencies,

Supporting efforts to realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to peacefully resolve the question of Palestine peacefully remains an important priority for the Committee.

The Committee has just concluded its independent legal study on "The legality of the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", which will constitute a crucial

reference in connection with the General Assembly's request to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for an advisory opinion on the prolonged occupation and violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Likewise, the Committee's engagement with the UN Human Rights Council's International Commission of Inquiry, which started in October 2022 following the release of the first report, identified opportunities for joint advocacy on the rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee supports the peaceful, legal approach to solving the Palestinian question and urges all Member States and the LAS to support these efforts.

Let me also state that the Committee categorically rejects the punitive measures being pursued by Israel, against the Palestinian Authority, for seeking justice through legitimate and peaceful means, including via the International Court of Justice, which is one of the principal organs of the United Nations, following the request for an advisory opinion made by the General Assembly on 30 December 2022. We call on Israel to immediately reverse such unilateral, illegal measures.

Excellencies,

The importance of sustained advocacy and awareness raising on the Question of Palestine is demonstrated by the request of the UN General Assembly request to the Committee to organize the

commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Nakba with a high-level event at UNHQ on 15 May 2023. We invite the LAS and all the Members of the League of Arab States to join hands with the Committee and continue our efforts to promote a just solution to this historic injustice.

The Committee stands ready to help garner the support needed to advance the peace process toward ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967. The Committee supports all efforts to accelerate an immediate and unconditional end to Israel's illegal, half-century-old occupation and establishing a two-State solution, with the achievement of the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees, in line with UN resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

Thank you.

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