



2024 Symposium on the Question of Jerusalem

“Jerusalem and the Gaza War: Palestinian Identity and Existence Under Threat of Erasure”

Convened by the

**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP)
and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**

OIC Headquarters - Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Monday, 1 July 2024

**Statement delivered at the opening session by Ambassador Cheikh Niang,
Chair of CEIRPP and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United
Nations.**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear guests,

We gather today in Jeddah as hearts are breaking for the Palestinian people in the entirety of the Occupied Territory. The ongoing nine-month-long war on Gaza remains the deadliest in modern times. At least 1.7 million Palestinians have been displaced amidst the Israeli aggression – that is more than three quarters of the whole population of the Gaza Strip; more than one million do not have drinking water and food, nor access to medical assistance. The recent Report by the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict found that this conflict alone has led to a 155 per cent increase of grave violations against Palestinian children.

Nothing can justify the collective punishment inflicted on the Palestinian people. The Committee reiterates the call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and unimpeded access of assistance throughout Gaza.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the spike of settler violence, the proliferation of illegal Israeli settlements, along with dispossession and demolitions of Palestinian homes, continue to represent a main obstacle to peace.

In East Jerusalem, the demographic and historical character of the City continues to be altered by illegal Israeli policies and measures, including the violation of Palestinians' freedoms of movement and worship. It also occurs through the destruction of old buildings and the construction of railroads and cable cars projects, as well as archaeological excavations affecting the Christian and Muslim quarters, to name but a few.

The City must be preserved, and the status quo of the Holy Sites must be upheld, in line with the custodianship of Jordan. Jerusalem must remain the city of three religions and two peoples – must be the City of Peace.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The status of Jerusalem forms an intrinsic part of the two-State solution, as reaffirmed by countless GA resolutions.

We welcome the recent recognition of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, by Barbados, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Norway, Spain, Ireland, and Slovenia. Similar steps are consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions and strengthen international efforts aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

We call to accept Palestine's membership in the UN as an independent and fully sovereign state in common with other Member States, and to uphold all inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. To this end, we welcome the decision of the General Assembly at its meeting on 10 May, supported by 143 countries, supporting the request of the State of Palestine to obtain full membership of the United Nations. We call on the Security Council to reconsider and lift its veto to the draft resolution voted on 18 April.

The devastation of the past nine months has only reinforced the absolute need for both Israel and Palestine, but also the broader international community and including the Member States of the OIC, to continue their active engagement to unblock the stalled political path to achieve a two-State solution.

The Committee will continue its advocacy efforts with Member States and in collaboration with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to achieve a just and lasting peaceful settlement, based on the two-State solution, and leading to an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Let us affirm our commitment to a diplomatic path forward where Jerusalem remains at the heart of any viable peace solution between Israelis and Palestinians and serves as a beacon of peace for both people.

Thank you.