

STATEMENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

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THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

**OPEN DEBATE
ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**

New York, 19 July 2024

Mr. President,
Distinguished Council members,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Russia for assuming the July presidency of the Security Council and to His Excellency, Minister Lavrov, for presiding over this meeting.

I also thank Mr. Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary General for his briefing. The Committee is grateful for the tireless efforts of the Secretary General toward achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

In April, we urgently called on the Security Council to heed the General Assembly and the growing public demand for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Israel's relentless and disproportionate military actions in densely populated Gaza have caused more than 38,000 dead and 85,000 injured, while displacing over 1.9 million Palestinians.

The Security Council must demand an immediate halt to Israeli military actions, reject the normalization of such atrocities, the wanton killing of non-combatants, women, children and men, the elderly. The Security Council must also demand an immediate halt of all violations being committed against a civilian population under Israel's occupation.

We welcome the long overdue listing of those committing grave violations against children in this year's report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. This step will contribute to accountability and help deter the heinous crimes being perpetrated against children in this prolonged conflict.

Dear Colleagues,

Our collective inaction is shameful and exacerbates Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe. We must make our slogans a reality: support the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fulfill our commitment to "leave no one behind".

Women in Gaza, the who are the majority of the victims, are bearing increased caregiving and domestic burdens in tents and makeshift shelters. This situation worsens daily as families are forced to move from one Israeli designated so-called "safe zone" to another, none of which are actually safe as they are also targets of Israeli bombings. The majority of the 2.3 million Gazans are forced to live amid rubble and garbage. Scores of dead bodies lying around, and a demolished sanitation system are heightening the risk of disease. Hunger is a painful reality afflicting the entire population while Israel continues to hamper delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The Committee reiterates its strong support for the work of UN agencies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Gaza. We unequivocally decry Israel's steps to undermine UNRWA and prevent the Agency to implement its GA-mandated activities. As the Secretary-General stated at the recent UNRWA Pledging Conference, there is no alternative to UNRWA. We must protect its staff and mandate.

Distinguished Council members,

Violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues at alarming levels, driven by Israel's army and settler violence as well as settlement activity. Palestinian communities continue to suffer an ongoing Nakba, forcibly driven from their land and becoming dispossessed. According to the Israeli press, hundreds of Palestinians in East Jerusalem are facing eviction. Israel provocations, ongoing challenges to the historic and legal status quo at the Holy Sites, and growing Judaization of the City put pressure on its Palestinian and Arab inhabitants, risking further tensions and violence. We reiterate that any action taken by Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal.

We condemn the expansion of illegal settlements and outposts, fueled by State policy and Israeli extremists. All settlement activity must stop.

The Committee acknowledges efforts by Egypt, Qatar and the United States to broker a cease-fire and the release of hostages. The Committee highlights the grave situation of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, often held without any charge and reportedly subject to torture, and reiterates calls for the release of all those unlawfully detained.

As has been stated in this Chamber many times, this conflict has wider ramifications. We must strive for peace in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and must demand adherence by all to the UN Charter's principles to prevent proliferation of conflicts that threaten regional stability and global peace and security.

United Nations resolutions and international law are clear: as the occupying Power, Israel has the obligation to protect Palestinian civilians. The Committee calls for humanitarian access adequate to the needs of the civilian population, and without delay.

The Committee recently concluded delegation visits to CARICOM, ASEAN, and the OIC to advocate for Palestinian rights. We warmly welcome the recent recognition of Palestine by Barbados, The Bahamas,

Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as by Armenia, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia and Spain. The Committee encourages every country that has not done so to recognize Palestine, affirming the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence. Recognition is an investment in peace that brings hope to the Palestinian people.

The Committee calls on all Member States to adhere to all provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), including those addressing the risk of genocide in Gaza initiated by South Africa and other Member States who deserve our praise. Disregarding ICJ orders undermines the international legal system and jeopardizes peace and security, which this Council must preserve.

Earlier today, the ICJ issued its landmark advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem. The Court declared Israel's continued presence in the OPT since 1967 unlawful and called on Israeli to bring it to an end as rapidly as possible. It urges Israel to cease all settlement activities, evacuate all settlers, and provide reparations to all natural or legal persons concerned in the OPT.

The Court also advised that all States are under an obligation to not recognize as legal the situation arising from this unlawful presence of

Israel in the OPT and not to render aid assistance in maintaining the current situation. We urge the General Assembly and the Security Council to act on the Court's call to end the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory swiftly”.

Our Committee and all Member States must stand ready to support these efforts.

Let me conclude by reaffirming that the only viable possibility for a peaceful future is a two-State solution, based on UN resolutions and international law, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security, and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.
