



Bangladesh

Statement under Agenda Item 50: *Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories* in the Fourth Committee of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly in Conference Room 4

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Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) under this agenda item.

Bangladesh thanks the esteemed members of the *Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories* for their detailed and incisive report. We commend the objective conclusions drawn, and the specific recommendations made, by the Special Committee to the attention of the international community for appropriate follow-up.

The Special Committee has once again been denied any cooperation, including consultation with the relevant Israeli authorities and access to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Despite such repeated defiance by Israel, we can only hope that the Israeli authorities would change track and take into consideration the urgent and legitimate recommendations addressed to them by the Special Committee.

In our view, the Special Committee continues to serve a critically important purpose by keeping the cause of the Palestinian people and other Arab populations under Israeli occupation alive and relevant in the backdrop of the outbreak and continuation of armed conflicts in different parts of the world.

The continued Israeli settlements, and the construction of the Wall in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, have emerged as the most blatant symbol of Israeli occupation, and are increasingly identified by the international community as the biggest threat to the viability of a 'two State' solution. The illegality of the settlements, affirmed by the International Court of Justice, continues to encroach into habitats and agricultural lands of the Palestinian people, and results in their displacements, livelihood disruption, and loss of traditional lifestyle for certain communities. It is regrettable that the Israeli authorities continue to offer impunity to Israeli settlers resorting to indiscriminate violence against Palestinians, and to individuals and entities engaged in unregulated exploitation of natural resources in the occupied territories.

Israel's excessive use of force continues unabated, in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and constitutes the commission of serious crimes under the purview of the international criminal law regime. The indiscriminate attacks against medical facilities and vehicles is further aggravating an already dire humanitarian situation.

It is deplorable that Israel continues with its degrading, and often inhumane, treatment of Palestinian detainees, including children, with hardly any recourse to justice. It is also profoundly disturbing to hear reports of denial of return of dead bodies of Palestinians for their dignified closure.

The Israeli land and sea blockade of Gaza is entering its tenth year, in an egregious demonstration of collective punishment against two million people for purported retaliation against certain individuals. The occasional disruption of

humanitarian assistance and other basic amenities have made living conditions for the Palestinians living in Gaza almost untenable. We urge the international community to prevail upon Israel to urgently lift the unjustified blockage, and allow the people in Gaza as well as other occupied territories their legitimate claims to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Bangladesh takes note of certain initiatives such as the International Conference held in Geneva in July this year at the French initiative, and underscores the need for restoring the “political horizon” for the Security Council to act in a decisive manner towards pursuing a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the protracted crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The solutions are embedded in the relevant Security Council Resolutions, the Quartet Roadmap, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Madrid Principle of ‘Land for Peace’. What is fundamentally absent is the genuine demonstration and application of the political will to move in the direction of those solutions.

With a view to contributing our part in mobilizing sufficient political will across the board, Bangladesh supports the proposal to declare the year 2017 as the “International Year to End the Occupation” to mark the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. We shall continue to encourage and support the work of the Special Committee and other relevant UN mechanisms and entities to sensitize the international community about the grave human rights violations and humanitarian consequences suffered by the Palestinian people under a half a century of illegal occupation that constitutes an affront to the purpose and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

I thank you.