



*Ambassador &
Permanent Representative*

জাতিসংঘে বাংলাদেশ স্থায়ী মিশন, নিউইয়র্ক
**Permanent Mission of Bangladesh
to the United Nations, New York**



Bangladesh

**Statement by H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative at
the open debate of the Security Council on “The Situation in the Middle East,
including the Palestinian Question”, 23 April 2020, New York**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating the Presidency of the Dominican Republic on their successful steering of the work of the Security Council for this month amid this profoundly challenging time.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by United Arab Emirates on behalf of the OIC.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General’s latest report on implementation of the Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) is concerning where he observes that ground situation in the occupied Palestinian territory has only deteriorated due to illegal occupation policies by Israel. It is more concerning that such activities are going on unabated even at this sobering time. As reported by the UN, since the outbreak of COVID-19, Israel has further intensified its military operations and demolished large number of Palestinian residential structures displacing hundreds of Palestinians and also injuring and detaining many; there is a surge of violence by Israeli settlers. Israel’s illegal settlement into Palestinian territory, land grab and construction of Wall are continuing, as do the provocative calls for annexation. It is unfortunate that Israel is exploiting the public health emergency to deflect international pressure and attention from the crisis. This is not only making the prospect for peace bleak but also undermining the pandemic containment efforts of the Palestinians. We join the international community in condemning these acts and call upon Israel for cessation of their hostilities responding to the Secretary-General’s Global Ceasefire Appeal.

Israel’s decades-long blockade has severely impaired the Palestinian health system which has been especially exposed during this pandemic. Palestinians are in urgent health care needs such as of test kits, ICUs and Ventilators which are scare. Therefore, although the number of confirmed cases appears to be low so far, any outbreak could be, as cautioned by UNRWA, ‘a disaster of gigantic proportions’. Besides, Israel’s discriminatory practices towards



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Palestinians in dealing with the pandemic are evident. Israel is neglecting its obligations to carry out vigorous testing and information dissemination and to adhere to health regulations. All these jeopardize the existing coordination between Israeli and Palestinians authorities which is critical to stop the community spread of COVID-19.

Unfettered access of humanitarian and medical assistance and entry of medical personnel for the Palestinians must be ensured. It is important that patients in Gaza requiring hospitalization be allowed to avail of it outside. In case of a community spread, closing the Gaza strip may severely deteriorate the situation. This should be averted. Besides, restrictions imposed to contain COVID-19 have isolated vulnerable communities and crippled their capacity to earn a living which ought to be removed. Vulnerable categories of detained and imprisoned Palestinian civilians need to be released from the overcrowded Israeli prisons who due to lack of healthcare and hygiene, are at the high risk of COVID-19 infection. International community has to ensure fulfillment of these critical requirements by Israel.

Israel's continued acts of aggression have given rise to an egregious culture of impunity which has to be brought to an end by ensuring accountability for all Israeli violations, upholding the rule of international law.

It is encouraging that the UN system on the ground and the Palestinian authorities are doing a good work despite all the constraints but these are clearly not enough. The perennial funding constraint of UNRWA has further aggravated due to the pandemic. The dedicated focus of Secretary-General's Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 on this crisis is welcome. Yet, UNRWA's estimate that its budget for core capacities will last till end of May is deeply worrying. Therefore, UNRWA's COVID-19 Response Flash Appeal requires immediate attention. We call upon the international community to come up with generous, predictable funding and technical assistance to enable UNRWA continue its work which is lifeline for Palestinians.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh believes that timely implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map holds the key to achieving a lasting peace for the people and the state of Palestine as well as in the Middle-east. We will continue to firmly stand by the cause of Palestinian struggle for self-determination till the establishment of the State of Palestine on the basis of Two-State solution and pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.



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We expect that in view of the COVID-19 pandemic the Security Council would make renewed efforts to end Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian territory in fulfillment of its Charter obligations through implementation of its relevant resolutions particularly resolution 2334 (2016).

Living in self-quarantine ourselves, we should now feel the pain of Palestinian population who have been in besieged conditions for decades. They need more than ever before, the global solidarity to fight the dual battle—against the pandemic and the Israeli occupation. And we should not fail them.

I thank you.